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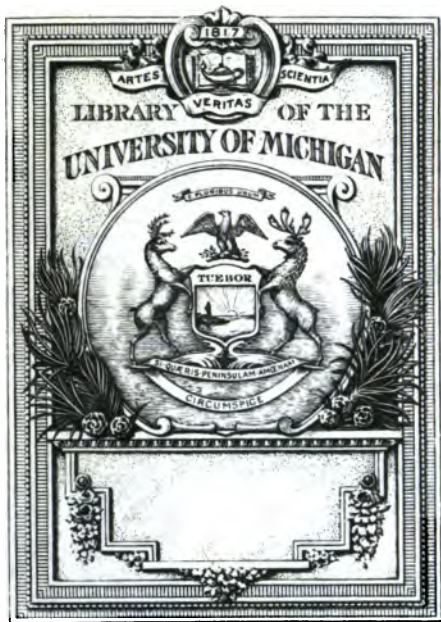
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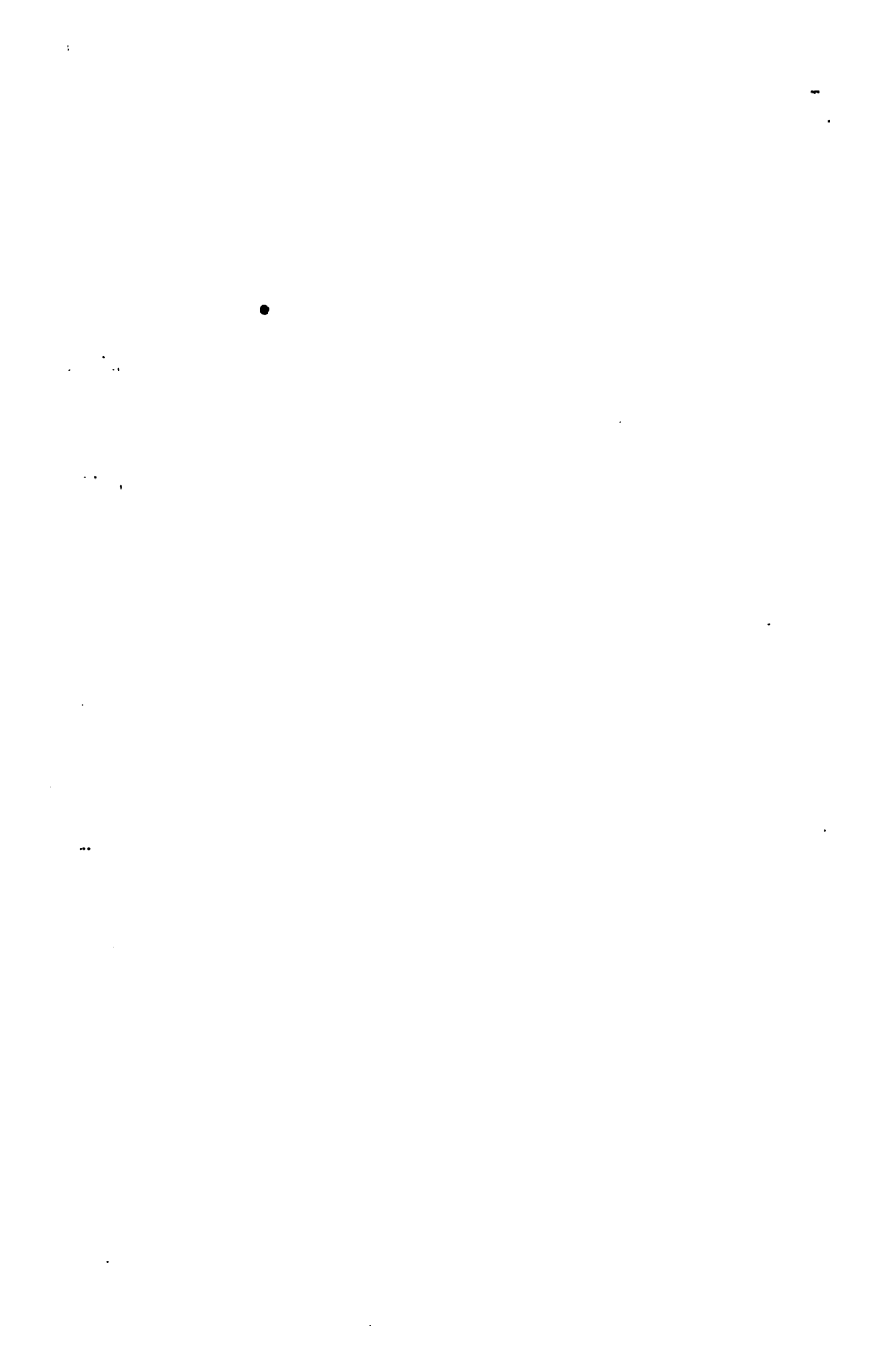
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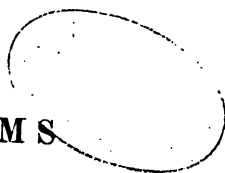








POEMS



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23



—

POEMS

BY

ALFRED TENNYSON,
POET LAUREATE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

A NEW EDITION.

BOSTON:
TICKNOR AND FIELDS.

M DCCO LXIII.

It is my wish that with Messrs. TICKNOR AND FIELDS
alone the right of publishing my books in America should
rest.

ALFRED TENNYSON.

This Edition contains "IN MEMORIAM" and "MAUD," with
all the additional Poems

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*break
big
with
valley coat
higher part
crossing bar*

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TO THE QUEEN.

REVERED, beloved, — O you that hold
A nobler office upon earth
Than arms, or power of brain, or birth,
Could give the warrior kings of old,

Victoria, — since your Royal grace
To one of less desert allows
This laurel greener from the brows
Of him that uttered nothing base ;

And should your greatness, and the care
That yokes with empire, yield you time
To make demand of modern rhyme,
If aught of ancient worth be there ;

Then — while a sweeter music wakes,
And through wild March the throstle calls,
Where, all about your palace-walls,
The sun-lit almond-blossom shakes --

Take, Madam, this poor book of song ;
For, though the faults were thick as dust
In vacant chambers, I could trust
Your kindness. May you rule us long,

And leave us rulers of your blood
As noble till the latest day !
May children of our children say,
“ She wrought her people lasting good ;

“ Her court was pure ; her life serene ;
God gave her peace ; her land reposed ;
A thousand claims to reverence closed
In her as Mother, Wife and Queen ;

“ And statesmen at her council met
Who knew the seasons, when to take
Occasion by the hand, and make
The bounds of freedom wider yet,

By shaping some august decree,
Which kept her throne unshaken still,
Broad-based upon her people's will,
And compassed by the inviolate sea.”

MARCH, 1851.

POEMS.

CLARIBEL.

A MELODY.

WHERE Claribel low-lieth
The breezes pause and die,
Letting the rose-leaves fall :
But the solemn oak-tree sigheth,
Thick-leaved, ambrosial,
With an ancient melody
Of an inward agony,
Where Claribel low-lieth.

At eve the beetle boometh
Athwart the thicket lone :
At noon the wild bee hummeth
About the mossed headstone :

At midnight the moon cometh
And looketh down alone.
Her song the lintwhite swelleth,
The clear-voiced mavis dwelleth,
The fledgling throble lispeth,
The slumbrous wave outwelleth,
The babbling runnel crispeth,
The hollow grot replieth
Where Claribel low-lieth.

L I L I A N .



Arry, fairy Lilian,
Flitting, fairy Lilian,
When I ask her if she love me,
Claps her tiny hands above me,
Laughing all she can ;
She 'll not tell me if she love me,
Cruel little Lilian.

When my passion seeks
Pleasance in love-sighs,
She, looking through and through me
Thoroughly to undo me,
Smiling, never speaks :
So innocent-arch, so cunning-simple,
From beneath her gathered wimple

Glancing with black-beaded eyes,
Till the lightning laughters dimple
The baby-roses in her cheeks ;
Then away she flies.

Prithee weep, May Lilian !
Gayety without eclipse
Wearieth me, May Lilian :
Through my very heart it thrilleth
When from crimson-threaded lips
Silver-treble laughter trilleth :
Prithee weep, May Lilian.

Praying all I can,
If prayers will not hush thee,
Airy Lilian,
Like a rose-leaf I will crush thee,
Fairy Lilian.

ISABEL.

EYES not down-dropt nor over-bright, but fed
With the clear-pointed flame of chastity,
Clear without heat, undying, tended by
Pure vestal thoughts in the translucent faue
Of her still spirit; locks not wide dispread,
Madonna-wise on either side her head;
Sweet lips whereon perpetually did reign
The summer calm of golden charity,
Were fixed shadows of thy fixed mood,
Revered Isabel, the crown and head,
The stately flower of female fortitude,
Of perfect wifehood and pure lowlihead.

The intuitive decision of a bright
And thorough-edged intellect to part

Error from crime ; a prudence to withhold ;
 The laws of marriage charactered in gold
 Upon the blanched tablets of her heart ;
 A love still burning upward, giving light
 To read those laws ; an accent very low
 In blandishment, but a most silver flow
 Of subtle-paced counsel in distress,
 Right to the heart and brain, though undescried,
 Winning its way with extreme gentleness
 Through all the outworks of suspicious pride ;
 A courage to endure and to obey ;
 A hate of gossip parlance, and of sway,
 Crowned Isabel, through all her placid life,
 The queen of marriage, a most perfect wife.

The mellowed reflex of a winter moon ;
 A clear stream flowing with a muddy one,
 Till in its onward current it absorbs
 With swifter movement and in purer light
 The vexed eddies of its wayward brother :
 A leaning and upbearing parasite,
 Clothing the stem, which else had fallen quite,
 With clustered flower-bells and ambrosial orbs

Of rich fruit-bunches leaning on each other —
Shadow forth thee :— the world hath not another
(Though all her fairest forms are types of thee,
And thou of God in thy great charity)
Of such a finished chastened purity.

M A R I A N A .

'Mariana in the moated grange.'—*Measure for Measure*.

I.

WITH blackest moss the flower-plots
Were thickly crusted, one and all :
The rusted nails fell from the knots
That held the ^{peach} bench to the garden-wall.
The broken sheds looked sad and strange ;
Unlifted was the clinking latch ;
Weeded and worn the ancient thatch
Upon the lonely moated grange.
She only said, " My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said ;
She said, " I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead ! "

II.

Her tears fell with the dews at even ;
Her tears fell ere the dews were dried ;
She could not look on the sweet heaven,
Either at morn or eventide.
After the flitting of the bats,
When thickest dark did trance the sky,
She drew her casement-curtain by,
And glanced athwart the glooming flats.
She only said, " The night is dreary,
He cometh not," she said ;
She said, " I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead ! "

III.

Upon the middle of the night,
Waking she heard the night-fowl crow :
The cock sung out an hour ere light :
From the dark fen the oxen's low
Came to her : without hope of change,
In sleep she seemed to walk forlorn,
Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed morn
About the lonely moated grange.

She only said, "The day is dreary
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

IV.

About a stone-cast from the wall
A sluice with blackened waters slept,
And o'er it many, round and small,
The clustered marish-mosses crept.
Hard by a poplar shook alway,
All silver-green with gnarled bark:
For leagues no other tree did mark
The level waste, the rounding gray.
She only said, "My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

V.

And ever when the moon was low,
And the shrill winds were up and away,
In the white curtain, to and fro,
She saw the gusty shadow sway.

But when the moon was very low,
 And wild winds bound within their cell,
 The shadow of the poplar fell
 Upon her bed, across her brow.

She only said, "The night is dreary,
 He cometh not," she said ;
 She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
 I would that I were dead!"

VI.

All day within the dreamy house
 The doors upon their hinges creaked ;
 The blue fly sung i' the pane ; the mouse
 Behind the mouldering wainscot shrieked,
 Or from the crevice peered about.
 Old faces glimmered through the doors,
 Old footsteps trod the upper floors,
 Old voices called her from without.

She only said, "My life is dreary,
 He cometh not," she said ;
 She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
 I would that I were dead!"

VII.

The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,
The slow clock ticking, and the sound
Which to the wooing wind aloof
The poplar made, did all confound
Her sense ; but most she loathed the hour
When the thick-moted sunbeam lay
Athwart the chambers, and the day
Was sloping toward his western bower.
Then, said she, " I am very dreary,
He will not come," she said ;
She wept, " I am weary, weary,
O God ! that I were dead ! "

TO ———.

CLEAR-HEADED friend, whose joyful scorn,
Edged with sharp laughter, cuts atwain
The knots that tangle human creeds,
The wounding cords that bind and strain
The heart until it bleeds,
Ray-fringed eyelids of the morn
Roof not a glance so keen as thine :
If aught of prophecy be mine,
Thou wilt not live in vain.

Low-cowering shall the Sophist sit ;
Falsehood shall bare her plaited brow :
Fair-fronted Truth shall droop not now
With shrilling shafts of subtle wit.
Nor martyr-flames nor trenchant swords
Can do away that ancient lie :
A gentler death shall Falsehood die,
Shot through and through with cunning words

Weak Truth, a-leaning on her crutch,
Wan, wasted Truth, in her utmost need,
Thy kingly intellect shall feed,
Until she be an athlete bold,
And weary with a finger's touch
Those writhed limbs of lightning speed ;
Like that strange angel which of old,
Until the breaking of the light,
Wrestled with wandering Israel,
Past Yabbok brook the lingering night,
And heaven's mazed signs stood still
In the dim tract of Penuel.

MADELINE.



THOU art not steeped in golden languors,
No tranced summer calm is thine,
Ever varying Madeline.
Through light and shadow thou dost range,
Sudden glances, sweet and strange,
Delicious spites, and darling angers,
And airy forms of fitting change.

Smiling, frowning, evermore,
Thou are perfect in love-lore.
Revealings deep and clear are thine
Of wealthy smiles: but who may know
Whether smile or frown be fleeter?
Whether smile or frown be sweeter,
Who may know?

Frowns perfect-sweet along the brow
Light-glooming over eyes divine,
Like little clouds sun-fringed, are thine,

Ever varying Madeline,

Thy smile and frown are not aloof
From one another,

Each to each is dearest brother ;

Hues of the silken sheeny woof

Momently shot into each other.

All the mystery is thine ;

Smiling, frowning, evermore,

Thou art perfect in love-lore,

Ever varying Madeline.

A subtle, sudden flame,

By veering passion fanned,

About thee breaks and dances ;

When I would kiss thy hand,

The flush of angered shame

O'erflows thy calmer glances,

And o'er black brows drops down

A sudden-curved frown :

But when I turn away,

Thou, willing me to stay,

Wooest not, nor vainly wranglest,
But, looking fixedly the while,
All my bounding heart entanglest
In a golden-netted smile ;
Then in madness and in bliss,
If my lips should dare to kiss
Thy taper fingers amorously,
Again thou blushest angerly ;
And o'er black brows drops down
A sudden-curved frown.

SONG.—THE OWL.

WHEN cats run home and light is come,
And dew is cold upon the ground,
And the far-off stream is dumb,
And the whirring sail goes round,
And the whirring sail goes round ;
Alone and warming his five wits,
The white owl in the belfry sits.

When merry milkmaids click the latch,
And rarely smells the new-mown hay,
And the cock hath sung beneath the thatch
Twice or thrice his roundelay,
Twice or thrice his roundelay ;
Alone and warming his five wits,
The white owl in the belfry sits.

SECOND SONG.

TO THE SAME.



THY tuwhits are lulled, I wot,
Thy tuwhoos of yesternight,
Which upon the dark afloat,
So took echo with delight,
So took echo with delight,
That her voice, untuneful grown
Wears all day a fainter tone.

I would mock thy chaunt anew ;
But I cannot mimic it ;
Not a whit of thy tuwhoo,
Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,
Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,
With a lengthened loud halloo,
Tuwhoo. tuwhit, tuwhit, tuwhoo-o-o.

RECOLLECTIONS
OF
THE ARABIAN NIGHTS.



I.

WHEN the breeze of a joyful dawn blew free
In the silken sail of infancy,
The tide of time flowed back with me,
The forward-flowing tide of time ;
And many a sheeny summer-morn,
Adown the Tigris I was borne,
By Bagdat's shrines of fretted gold,
High-walled gardens green and old ;
True Mussulman was I and sworn,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

II.

Anight my shallop, rustling through
The low and bloomed foliage, drove .
The fragrant, glistening deeps, and clove
The citron-shadows in the blue :
By garden porches on the brim,
The costly doors flung open wide,
Gold glittering through lamplight dim,
And broidered sofas on each side :
 In sooth it was a goodly time,
 For it was in the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

III.

Often, where clear-stemmed platans guard
The outlet, did I turn away
The boat-head down a broad canal
From the main river sluiced, where all
The sloping of the moon-lit sward
Was damask-work, and deep inlay
Of braided blooms unmown, which crept
Adown to where the waters slept.
 A goodly place, a goodly time,
 For it was in the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

IV.

A motion from the river won
Ridged the smooth level, bearing on
My shallop through the star-strown calm,
Until another night in night
I entered, from the clearer light,
Imbowered vaults of pillared palm,
Imprisoning sweets, which, as they clomb
Heavenward, were stayed beneath the dome
Of hollow boughs. — A goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

V.

Still onward ; and the clear canal
Is rounded to as clear a lake.
From the green rivage many a fall
Of diamond rillets musical,
Through little crystal arches low
Down from the central fountain's flow
Fallen silver-chiming, seemed to shake
The sparkling flints beneath the prow.
A goodly place, a goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

VI.

Above through many a bowery turn
A walk with vary-colored shells
Wandered engrained. On either side
All round about the fragrant marge
From fluted vase, and brazen urn,
In order, eastern flowers large
Some dropping low their crimson bells
Half-closed, and others studded wide
 With disks and tiars, fed the time
 With odor in the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

VII.

Far off, and where the lemon-grove
In closest coverture upsprung,
The living airs of middle night
Died round the bulbul as he sung
Not he: but something which possessed
The darkness of the world, delight,
Life, anguish, death, immortal love,
Ceasing not, mingled, unrepressed,
 Apart from place, withholding time,
 But flattering the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

VIII.

Black the garden-bowers and grotts
Slumbered : the solemn palms were ranged
Above, unwooded of summer wind :
A sudden splendor from behind
Flushed all the leaves with rich gold-green,
And, flowing rapidly between
Their interspaces, counterchanged
The level lake with diamond-plots
Of dark and bright. A lovely time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

IX.

Dark-blue the deep sphere overhead,
Distinct with vivid stars inlaid,
Grew darker from that under-flame :
So, leaping lightly from the boat,
With silver anchor left afloat,
In marvel whence that glory came
Upon me, as in sleep I sank
In cool soft turf upon the bank,
Entranced with that place and time,
So worthy of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

X.

Thence through the garden I was drawn -
A realm of pleasance, many a mound,
And many a shadow-chequered lawn
Full of the city's stilly sound,
And deep myrrh-thickets blowing round
The stately cedar, tamarisks,
Thick rosaries of scented thorn,
Tall orient shrubs, and obelisks
Graven with emblems of the time,
In honor of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

XI.

With dazed vision unawares
From the long alley's lattice shade
Emerged, I came upon the great
Pavilion of the Caliphat.
Right to the carven cedarn doors,
Flung inward over spangled floors,
Broad-based flights of marble stairs
Ran up with golden balustrade,
After the fashion of the time,
And humor of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

XII.

The fourscore windows all alight
As with the quintessence of flame,
A million tapers flaring bright
From twisted silvers looked to shame
The hollow-vaulted dark, and streamed
Upon the mooned domes aloof
In inmost Bagdat, till there seemed
Hundreds of crescents on the roof
Of night new risen, that marvellous time,
To celebrate the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

XIII.

Then stole I up, and trancedly
Gazed on the Persian girl alone,
Serene with argent-lidded eyes,
Amorous, and lashes like to rays
Of darkness, and a brow of pearl
Tressed with redolent ebony,
In many a dark delicious curl,
Flowing beneath her rose-hued zone
The sweetest lady of the time,
Well worthy of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

XIV.

Six columns, three on either side,
Pure silver, underpropt a rich
Throne of the massive ore, from which
Down-drooped, in many a floating fold,
Engarlanded and diapered —
With inwrought flowers, a cloth of gold.
Thereon, his deep eye laughter-stirred
With merriment of kingly pride,
Sole star of all that place and time,
I saw him — in his golden prime,
THE GOOD HAROUN ALRASCHID!

(?)

ODE TO MEMORY.

I.

THOU who stealest fire,
From the fountains of the past,
To glorify the present ; oh, haste,
Visit my low desire !
Strengthen me, enlighten me !
I faint in this obscurity,
Thou dewy dawn of memory.

II.

Come not as thou camest of late,
Flinging the gloom of yesternight
On the white day ; but robed in softened light
Of orient state.
Whilome thou camest with the morning mist,
Even as a maid, whose stately brow
The dew-impearled winds of dawn have kissed,
When she, as thou,

Stays on her floating locks the lovely freight
Of overflowing blooms, and earliest shoots
Of orient green, giving safe pledge of fruits,
Which in wintertide shall star
The black earth with brilliance rare.

III.

Whilome thou camest with the morning mist,
 And with the evening cloud,
Showering thy gleaned wealth into my open breast,
(Those peerless flowers which in the rudest wind
 Never grow sere,
When rooted in the garden of the mind,
 Because they are the earliest of the year.)
 Nor was the night thy shroud.
In sweet dreams softer than unbroken rest
Thou leddest by the hand thine infant Hope.
The eddy of her garments caught from thee
The light of thy great presence; and the cope
 Of the half-attained futurity,
 Though deep, not fathomless,
Was cloven with the million stars that tremble
O'er the deep mind of dauntless infancy.
Small thought was there of life's distress;

For sure she deemed no mist of earth could dull
Those spirit-thrilling eyes so keen and beautiful :
Sure she was nigher to heaven's spheres,
Listening the lordly music flowing from
 The illimitable years.
O strengthen me, enlighten me !
I faint in this obscurity,
Thou dewy dawn of memory.

IV.

Come forth, I charge thee, arise,
Thou of the many tongues, the myriad eyes !
Thou comest not with shows of flaunting vines
 Unto mine inner eye,
 Divinest memory !
Thou wert not nursed by the waterfall
Which ever sounds and shines
 A pillar of white light upon the wall
Of purple cliffs, aloof descried :
Come from the woods that belt the gray hill-side,
The seven elms, the poplars four,
That stand beside my father's door,
And chiefly from the brook that loves
To purl o'er matted cress and ribbed sand,

Or dimple in the dark of rushy coves,
Drawing into his narrow earthen urn,
 In every elbow and turn,
The filtered tribute of the rough woodland.
 O ! hither lead thy feet !
Pour round mine ears the livelong bleat
Of the thick-fleeced sheep from wattled folds,
 Upon the ridged wolds,
When the first matin-song hath wakened loud
Over the dark dewy earth forlorn,
What time the amber morn
Forth gushes from beneath a low-hung cloud.

v.

Large dowries doth the raptured eye
 To the young spirit present
 When first she is wed ;
 And like a bride of old
In triumph led,
 With music and sweet showers
 Of festal flowers,
 Unto the dwelling she must sway.
Well hast thou done, great artist Memory,
 In setting round thy first experiment

With royal frame-work of wrought gold ;
Needs must thou dearly love thy first essay,
And foremost in thy various gallery
Place it, where sweetest sunlight falls
Upon the storied walls ;
For the discovery
And newness of thine art so pleased thee,
That all which thou hast drawn of fairest
Or boldest since, but lightly weighs
With thee unto the love thou bearest
The first-born of thy genius. Artist-like,
Ever retiring thou dost gaze
On the prime labor of thine early days :
No matter what the sketch might be ;
Whether the high field on the bushless Pike,
Or even a sand-built ridge
Of heaped hills that mound the sea,
Overblown with murmurs harsh,
Or even a lowly cottage whence we see
Stretched wide and wild the waste enormous marsh,
Where from the frequent bridge,
Like emblems of infinity,
The trenched waters run from sky to sky ;
Or a garden bowered close
With plaited alleys of the trailing rose,

Long alleys falling down to twilight grots,
Or opening upon level plots
Of crowned lilies, standing near
Purple-spiked lavender :
Whether in after life retired
From brawling storms,
From weary wind,
With youthful fancy reinspired,
We may hold converse with all forms
Of the many-sided mind,
And those whom passion had not blinded,
Subtle-thoughted, myriad-minded,
My friend, with you to live alone,
Methinks were better than to own
A crown, a sceptre, and a throne.
O strengthen me, enlighten me !
I faint in this obscurity,
Thou dewy dawn of memory.

SONG.

I.

A SPIRIT haunts the year's last hours,
Dwelling amid these yellowing bowers :
 To himself he talks ;
For at eventide, listening earnestly,
At his work you may hear him sob and sigh
 In the walks ;
 Earthward he boweth the heavy stalks
Of the mouldering flowers :
 Heavily hangs the broad sunflower
 Over its grave i' the earth so chilly ;
 Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
 Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

II.

'The air is damp, and hushed, and close,
As a sick man's room when he taketh repose
 An hour before death ;

My very heart faints and my whole soul grieves
At the moist rich smell of the rotting leaves,
 And the breath
 Of the fading edges of box beneath,
And the year's last rose.
 Heavily hangs the broad sunflower
 Over its grave i' the earth so chilly ·
Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
 Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

ADELINE.

MYSTERY of mysteries,
Faintly smiling Adeline,
Scarce of earth nor all divine,
Nor unhappy, nor at rest,
But beyond expression fair,
With thy floating flaxen hair ;
Thy rose-lips and full blue eyes
Take the heart from out my breast.
Wherefore those dim looks of thine,
Shadowy, dreaming Adeline ?

Whence that aery bloom of thine,
Like a lily which the sun
Looks through in his sad decline,
And a rose-bush leans upon,

Thou that faintly smilest still,
As a Naiad in a well,
Looking at the set of day,
Or a phantom two hours old
Of a maiden past away,
Ere the placid lips be cold ?
Wherefore those faint smiles of thine,
Spiritual Adeline ?

What hope or fear or joy is thine ?
Who talketh with thee, Adeline ?
For sure thou art not all alone :
Do beating hearts of salient springs
Keep measure with thine own ?
Hast thou heard the butterflies
What they say betwixt their wings ?
Or in stillest evenings
With what voice the violet woos
To his heart the silver dews ?
Or when little airs arise,
How the merry bluebell rings
To the mosses underneath ?
Hast thou looked upon the breath
Of the lilies at sunrise ?

Wherefore that faint smile of thine,
Shadowy, dreaming Adeline ?

Some honey-converse feeds thy mind,
Some spirit of a crimson rose
In love with thee forgets to close
His curtains, wasting odorous sighs
All night long on darkness blind.
What aileth thee ? whom waitest thou
With thy softened, shadowed brow,
And those dew-lit eyes of thine,
Thou faint smiler, Adeline ?

Lovest thou the doleful wind
When thou gazest at the skies ?
Doth the low-tongued Orient
Wander from the side o' the morn,
Dripping with Sabæan spice
On thy pillow, lowly bent
With melodious airs lovelorn,
Breathing light against thy face,
While his locks a-dropping twined
Round thy neck in subtle ring
Make a carcanet of rays

And ye talk together still,
In the language wherewith Spring
Letters cawslips on the hill ?
Hence that look and smile of thine,
Spiritual Adeline.

A CHARACTER.



I.

WITH a half-glance upon the sky
At night he said, "The wanderings
Of this most intricate Universe
Teach' me the nothingness of things."
Yet could not all creation pierce
Beyond the bottom of his eye.

II.

He spake of beauty : that the dull
Saw no divinity in grass,
Life in dead stones, or spirit in air ;
Then looking as 't were in a glass,
He smoothed his chin and sleeked his hair,
And said the earth was beautiful.

III.

He spake of virtue : not the gods
More purely, when they wish to charm
Pallas and Juno sitting by :
And with a sweeping of the arm,
And a lack-lustre dead-blue eye,
Devolved his rounded periods.

IV.

Most delicately hour by hour
He canvassed human mysteries,
And trod on silk, as if the winds
Blew his own praises in his eyes,
And stood aloof from other minds
In impotence of fancied power.

V.

With lips depressed as he were meek,
Himself unto himself he sold :
Upon himself himself did feed :
Quiet, dispassionate, and cold,
And other than his form of creed,
With chiselled features clear and sleek.

THE POET.

THE poet in a golden clime was born,
With golden stars above ;
Dowered with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,
The love of love.

He saw through life and death, through good and ill,
He saw through his own soul.
The marvel of the everlasting will,
An open scroll,

Before him lay : with echoing feet he threaded
The secret'st walks of fame :
The viewless arrows of his thoughts were headed
And winged with flame,

Like Indian reeds blown from his silver tongue,
And of so fierce a flight,
From Calpe unto Caucasus they sung,
Filling with light

And vagrant melodies the winds which bore
Them earthward till they lit ;
Then, like the arrow-seeds of the field-flower,
The fruitful wit,

Cleaving, took root, and springing forth anew
Where'er they fell, behold,
Like to the mother plant in semblance, grew
A flower all gold,

And bravely furnished all abroad to fling
The winged shafts of truth,
To throng with stately blooms the breathing spring
Of Hope and Youth.

So many minds did gird their orbs with beams,
Though one did fling the fire.
Heaven flowed upon the soul in many dreams
Of high desire.

Thus truth was multiplied on truth, the world
Like one great garden showed,
And through the wreaths of floating dark upcurled,
Rare sunrise flowed.

And Freedom reared in that august sunrise
Her beautiful bold brow,
When rites and forms before his burning eyes
Melted like snow.

There was no blood upon her maiden robes
Sunned by those orient skies ;
But round about the circles of the globes
Of her keen eyes

And in her raiment's hem was traced in flame
WISDOM, a name to shake
All evil dreams of power — a sacred name.
And when she spake,



Her words did gather thunder as they ran,
And as the lightning to the thunder
Which follows it, riving the spirit of man,
Making earth wonder,

So was their meaning to her words. No sword
Of wrath her right arm whirled,
But one poor poet's scroll, and with *his* word
She shook the world.

THE POET'S MIND.



I.

Vex not thou the poet's mind
With thy shallow wit :
Vex not thou the poet's mind ;
For thou can'st not fathom it,
Clear and bright it should be ever,
Flowing like a crystal river ;
Bright as light, and clear as wind.

II.

Dark-browed sophist, come not anear ;
All the place is holy ground ;
Hollow smile and frozen sneer
Come not here.
Holy water' will I pour
Into every spicy flower

Of the laurel-shrubs that hedge it around.
The flowers would faint at your cruel cheer.
 In your eye there is death,
 There is frost in your breath
Which would blight the plants.
 Where you stand you cannot hear
 From the groves within
 The wild-bird's din.
In the heart of the garden the merry bird chaunts,
It would fall to the ground if you came in.
 In the middle leaps a fountain
 Like sheet lightning,
 Ever brightening
 With a low melodious thunder ;
All day and all night it is ever drawn
 From the brain of the purple mountain
 Which stands in the distance yonder :
It springs on a level of bowery lawn,
And the mountain draws it from Heaven above,
And it sings a song of undying love ;
And yet, though its voice be so clear and full,
You never would hear it — your ears are so dull ;
So keep where you are : you are foul with sin ;
It would shrink to the earth if you came in.

THE DYING SWAN.



THE plain was grassy, wild and bare,
Wide, wild, and open to the air,
Which had built up everywhere

 An under-roof of doleful gray.
With an inner voice the river ran,
Adown it floated a dying swan,

 Which loudly did lament.
It was the middle of the day.

 Ever the weary wind went on,
And took the reed-tops as it went.

Some blue peaks in the distance rose,
And white against the cold-white sky
Shone out their crowning snows.

One willow over the river wept,
And shook the wave as the wind did sigh ;
Above in the wind was the swallow,
Chasing itself at its own wild will,
And far through the marish green and still
The tangled water-courses slept,
Shot over with purple, and green and yellow.

The wild swan's death-hymn took the soul
Of that waste place with joy
Hidden in sorrow : at first to the ear
The warble was low, and full and clear ;
And floating about the under-sky,
Prevailing in weakness, the coronach stole
Sometimes afar, and sometimes anear ;
But anon her awful jubilant voice,
With a music strange and manifold,
Flowed forth on a carol free and bold :
As when a mighty people rejoice
With shawms, and with cymbals, and harps of gold,
And the tumult of their acclaim is rolled
Through the open gates of the city afar,
To the shepherd who watcheth the evening star.
And the creeping mosses and clambering weeds,
And the willow-branches hoar and dank,

And the wavy swell of the soughing reeds,
And the wave-worn horns of the echoing bank,
And the silvery marish-flowers that throng
The desolate creeks and pools among,
Were flooded over with eddying song.

A DIRGE.



I.

Now is done thy long day's work ;
Fold thy palms across thy breast,
Fold thine arms, turn to thy rest.

Let them rave.

Shadows of the silver birk
Sweep the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave.

II.

Thee nor carketh care nor slander ;
Nothing but the small cold worm
Fretteth thine enshrouded form.

Let them rave.

Light and shadow ever wander
O'er the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave.

III.

Thou wilt not turn upon thy bed ;
Chaunteth not the brooding bee
Sweeter tones than calumny ?

Let them rave.

Thou wilt never raise thine head
From the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave.

IV.

Crocodiles wept tears for thee ;
The woodbine and eglatere
Drip sweeter dews than traitor's tear.

Let them rave.

Rain makes music in the tree
O'er the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave.

V.

Round thee blow, self-pleached deep,
Bramble-roses, faint and pale,
And long purples of the dale.

Let them rave.

These in every shower creep
Through the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

VI.

The gold-eyed kingcups fine,
The frail bluebell peereth over
Rare broidry of the purple clover.
Let them rave.
Kings have no such couch as thine,
As the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

VII.

Wild words wander here and there ;
God's great gift of speech abused
Makes thy memory confused —
But let them rave.
The balm-cricket carols clear
In the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

LOVE AND DEATH.

WHAT time the mighty moon was gathering light,
Love paced the thymy plots of Paradise,
And all about him rolled his lustrous eyes ;
When, turning round a cassia, full in view
Death, walking all alone beneath a yew,
And talking to himself, first met his sight :
"You must begone," said Death ; " these walks are mine.
Love wept and spread his sheeny vans for flight ;
Yet ere he parted said, " This hour is thine ;
Thou art the shadow of life, and as the tree
Stands in the sun and shadows all beneath,
So in the light of great eternity
Life eminent creates the shade of death ;
The shadow passeth when the tree shall fall,
But I shall reign forever over all."

THE
BALLAD OF ORIANA.

My heart is wasted with my woe,

Oriana.

There is no rest for me below,

Oriana.

When the long dun wolds are ribbed with snow,

And loud the Norland whirlwinds blow,

Oriana,

Alone I wander to and fro,

Oriana.

Ere the light on dark was growing,

Oriana,

At midnight the cock was crowing,

Oriana :

Winds were blowing, waters flowing,
We heard the steeds to battle going,
 Oriana ;
Aloud the hollow bugle blowing
 Oriana.

In the yew-wood, black as night,
 Oriana,
Ere I rode into the fight,
 Oriana,
While blissful tears blinded my sight,
By star-shine and by moon-light,
 Oriana,
I to thee my troth did plight,
 Oriana.

She stood upon the castle wall,
 Oriana :
She watched my crest among them all,
 Oriana :
She saw me fight, she heard me call,
When forth there stept a foeman tall,
 Oriana,
Atween me and the castle wall,
 Oriana.

The bitter arrow went aside,

Oriana :

The false, false arrow went aside,

Oriana :

The damned arrow glanced aside,

And pierced thy heart, my love, my bride,

Oriana !

Thy heart, my life, my love, my bride,

Oriana !

O ! narrow, narrow was the space,

Oriana.

Loud, loud rung out the bugle's brays,

Oriana.

O ! deathful stabs were dealt apace,

The battle deepened in its place,

Oriana ;

But I was down upon my face,

Oriana.

They should have stabbed me where I lay,

Oriana !

How could I rise and come away,

Oriana ?

How could I look upon the day?
They should have stabbed me where I lay,
 Oriana —
They should have trod me into clay,
 Oriana.

O! breaking heart that will not break,
 Oriana ;
O! pale, pale face so sweet and meek,
 Oriana.

Thou smilest, but thou dost not speak,
And then the tears run down my cheek,
 Oriana :
What wantest thou? whom dost thou seek,
 Oriana ?

I cry aloud: none hear my cries,
 Oriana.
Thou comest atween me and the skies,
 Oriana.
I feel the tears of blood arise
Up from my heart unto my eyes,
 Oriana.
Within thy heart my arrow lies,
 Oriana.

O cursed hand! oh cursed blow!

Oriana!

O happy thou that liest low,

Oriana!

All night the silence seems to flow

Beside me in my utter woe,

Oriana.

A weary, weary way I go,

Oriana.

When Norland winds pipe down the sea,

Oriana,

I walk, I dare not think of thee,

Oriana.

Thou liest beneath the greenwood tree,

I dare not die and come to thee,

Oriana.

I hear the roaring of the sea,

Oriana.

C I R C U M S T A N C E .



Two children in two neighbor villages
Playing mad pranks along the heathy leas ;
Two strangers meeting at a festival ;
Two lovers whispering by an orchard wall ;
Two lives bound fast in one with golden ease ;
Two graves grass-green beside a gray church-tower,
Washed with still rains and daisy-blossomed ;
Two children in one hamlet born and bred ;
So runs the round of life from hour to hour.

THE MERMAN.



Who would be
A merman bold
Sitting alone,
Singing alone
Under the sea,
With a crown of gold,
On a throne ?

I would be a merman bold ;
I would sit and sing the whole of the day ;
I would fill the sea-halls with a voice of power ;
But at night I would roam abroad, and play
With the mermaids in and out of the rocks,
Dressing their hair with the white sea-flower ;
And holding them back by their flowing locks,
I would kiss them often under the sea,
And kiss them again till they kissed me
Laughingly, laughingly ;

And then we would wander away, away
To the pale-green sea-groves straight and high,
Chasing each other merrily.

There would be neither moon nor star ;
But the wave would make music above us afar —
Low thunder and light in the magic night —
Neither moon nor star.

We would call aloud in the dreamy dells,
Call to each other and whoop and cry
All night, merrily, merrily ;
They would pelt me with starry spangles and shells,
Laughing and clapping their hands between,
All night, merrily, merrily ;

But I would throw them back in mine
Turkis and agate and almondine :
Then leaping out upon them unseen,
I would kiss them often under the sea,
And kiss them again till they kissed me
Laughingly, laughingly.

O ! what a happy life were mine
Under the hollow-hung ocean green !
Soft are the moss-beds under the sea ;
We would live merrily, merrily.

THE MERMAID

Who would be
A mermaid fair,
Singing alone,
Combing her hair
Under the sea,
In a golden curl
With a comb of pearl,
On a throne ?

I would be a mermaid fair ;
I would sing to myself the whole of the day ;
With a comb of pearl I would comb my hair ;
And still as I combed I would sing and say,
“ Who is it loves me ? who loves not me ? ”
I would comb my hair till my ringlets would fall,

Low adown, low adown,
From under my starry sea-bud crown
Low adown and around,
And I should look like a fountain of gold
Springing alone
With a shrill inner sound,
Over the throne
In the midst of the hall ;
Till that great sea-snake under the sea
From his coiled sleeps in the central deeps
Would slowly trail himself sevenfold
Round the hall where I sate, and look in at the gate
With his large calm eyes for the love of me.
And all the mermen under the sea
Would feel their immortality
Die in their hearts for the love of me.

But at night I would wander away, away,
I would fling on each side my low-flowing locks,
And lightly vault from the throne and play
With the mermen in and out of the rocks ;
We would run to and fro, and hide and seek,
On the broad sea-wolds i' the crimson shells,
Whose silvery spikes are nighest the sea.
But if any came near, I would call, and shriek,
And adown the steep like a wave I would leap

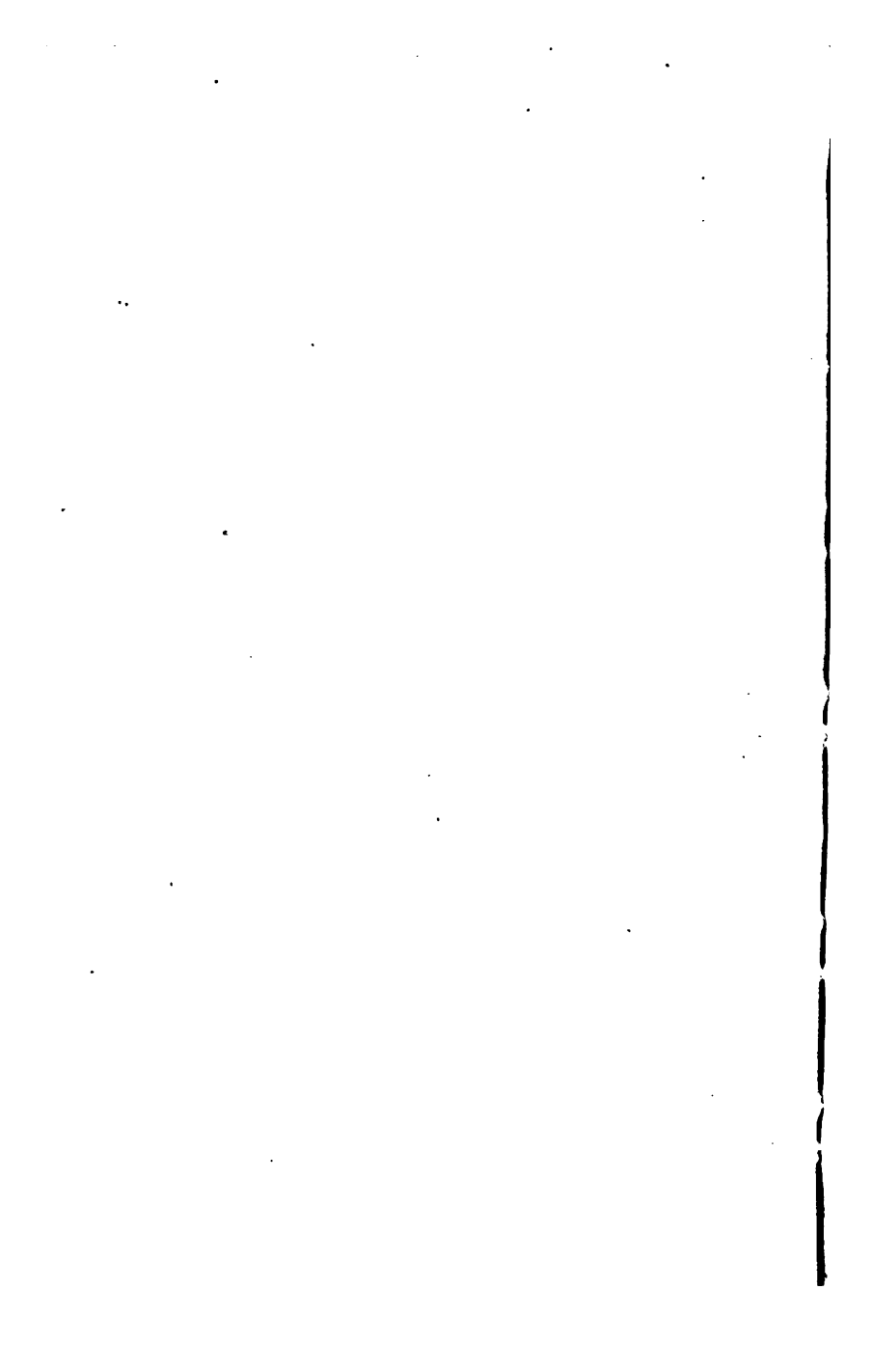
From the diamond ledges that jut from the delis ;
For I would not be kissed by all who would list,
Of the bold merry mermen under the sea ;
They would sue me, and woo me, and flatter me,
In the purple twilights under the sea ;
But the king of them all would carry me,
Woo me, and win me, and marry me,
In the branching jaspers under the sea ;
Then all the dry pied things that be
In the hueless mosses under the sea
Would curl round my silver feet silently,
All looking up for the love of me.
And if I should carol aloud, from aloft
All things that are forked, and horned, and soft,
Would lean out from the hollow sphere of the sea,
All looking down for the love of me.

SONNET TO J. M. K.

MY hope and heart is with thee — thou wilt be
A latter Luther, and a soldier-priest
To scare church-harpies from the master's feast;
Our dusted velvets have much need of thee :
Thou art no sabbath-drawler of old saws,
Distilled from some worm-cankered homily ;
But spurred at heart with fieriest energy
To embattail and to wall about thy cause
With iron-worded proof, hating to hark
The humming of the drowsy pulpit-drone
Half God's good sabbath, while the worn-out clerk
Brow-beats his desk below. Thou from a throne
Mounted in heaven wilt shoot into the dark
Arrows of lightnings. I will stand and mark.

POEMS.

(PUBLISHED 1832.)



THE LADY OF SHALOTT.

PART I.

ON either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky ;
And through the field the road runs by
 To many-towered Camelot ;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
 The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Through the wave that runs forever
By the island in the river
 Flowing down to Camelot.

Four gray walls, and four gray towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
 The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veiled,
Shine the heavy barges trailed
By slow horses ; and unhailed,
The shallop flitteth silken-sailed,
 Skimming down to Camelot :
But who hath seen her wave her hand ?
Or at the casement seen her stand ?
Or is she known in all the land,
 The Lady of Shalott ?

Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly,
 Down to towered Camelot :
And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers " 'T is the fairy
 Lady of Shalott."

PART II.

THERE she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colors gay.
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay
 To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the curse may be,
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
 The Lady of Shalott.

And moving through a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year
Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
 Winding down to Camelot:
There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village-churls,
And the red cloaks of market-girls,
 Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad

The sun came dazling through the leaves,
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
Of bold Sir Lancelot.

A redcross knight forever kneeled
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field,
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glittered free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.
The bridle bells rang merrily
As he rode down to Camelot :
And from his blazoned baldric slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armor rung,
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewelled shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burned like one burning flame together,
As he rode down to Camelot.
As often through the purple night,

Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glowed;
On burnished hooves his war-horse trode,
From underneath his helmet flowed
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot.
From the bank and from the river
He flashed into the crystal mirror,
“Tirra lirra,” by the river
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces through the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She looked down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror cracked from side to side;
“The curse is come upon me,” cried
The Lady of Shalott.

PART IV.

In the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining,
Heavily the low sky raining

Over towered Camelot ;
Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote

The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse —
Like some bold seer in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance —
With a glassy countenance

Did she look to Camelot.

And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down she lay ;
The broad stream bore her far away,

The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right —

The leaves upon her falling light —
Through the noises of the night

She floated down to Camelot :

And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,

The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darkened wholly,
Turned to towered Camelot ;

For ere she reached upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,

The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by,
A corse between the houses high,

Silent into Camelot.

Out upon the wharfs they came,

Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
And round the prow they read her name,
The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this ? and what is here ?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer ;
And they crossed themselves for fear,
 All the knights at Camelot :
But Lancelot mused a little space ;
He said, " She has a lovely face ;
God in his mercy lend her grace,
 The Lady of Shalott."

MARIANA IN THE SOUTH.

I.

WITH one black shadow at its feet,
The house through all the level shines,
Close-latticed to the brooding heat,
And silent in its dusty vines :
A faint-blue ridge upon the right,
An empty river-bed before,
And shallows on a distant shore,
In glaring sand and inlets bright.
But "Ave Mary," made she moan,
And "Ave Mary," night and morn,
And "Ah," she sang, "to be all alone,
To live forgotten, and love forlorn."

II.

She, as her carol sadder grew,
From brow and bosom slowly down
Through rosy taper fingers drew
Her streaming curls of deepest brown

To left and right, and made appear,
Still-lighted in a secret shrine,
Her melancholy eyes divine,
The home of woe without a tear.
And "Ave Mary," was her moan,
"Madonna, sad is night and morn ;"
And "Ah," she sang, "to be all alone,
To live forgotten, and love forlorn."

III.

Till all the crimson changed, and past
Into deep orange o'er the sea,
Low on her knees herself she cast,
Before Our Lady murmured she ;
Complaining, "Mother, give me grace
To help me of my weary load."
And on the liquid mirror glowed
The clear perfection of her face.
"Is this the form," she made her moan,
"That won his praises night and morn ?"
And "Ah," she said, "but I wake alone
I sleep forgotten, I wake forlorn."

IV.

Nor bird would sing, nor lamb would bleat,
Nor any cloud would cross the vault,
But day increased from heat to heat,
On stony drought and steaming salt;
Till now at noon she slept again,
And seemed knee-deep in mountain grass,
And heard her native breezes pass,
And runlets babbling down the glen.
She breathed in sleep a lower moan,
And murmuring, as at night and morn,
She thought, "My spirit is here alone,
Walks forgotten, and is forlorn."

V.

Dreaming, she knew it was a dream :
She felt he was and was not there.
She woke : the babble of the stream
Fell, and without the steady glare
Shrank the sick olive sere and small.
The river-bed was dusty white ;
And all the furnace of the light
Struck up against the blinding wall.

She whispered, with a stifled moan
More inward than at night or morn,
"Sweet Mother, let me not here alone
Live forgotten, and die forlorn."

VI.

And, rising, from her bosom drew
Old letters, breathing of her worth,
For "Love," they said, "must needs be true,
To what is loveliest upon earth."
An image seemed to pass the door,
To look at her with slight, and say,
"But now thy beauty flows away,
So be alone for evermore."
"O cruel heart," she changed her tone,
"And cruel love, whose end is scorn,
Is this the end to be left alone,
To live forgotten, and die forlorn!"

VII.

But sometimes in the falling day
An image seemed to pass the door,
To look into her eyes and say,
"But thou shalt be alone no more."

And flaming downward over all
From heat to heat the day decreased,
And slowly rounded to the east
The one black shadow from the wall.
"The day to night," she made her moan,
"The day to night, the night to morn,
And day and night I am left alone,
To live forgotten, and love forlorn."

VIII.

At eve a dry cicala sung,
There came a sound as of the sea ;
Backward the lattice-blind she flung,
And leaned upon the balcony.
There all in spaces rosy-bright
Large Hesper glittered on her tears,
And deepening through the silent spheres,
Heaven over Heaven rose the night.
And weeping then she made her moan,
"The night comes on that knows not morn,
When I shall cease to be all alone,
To live forgotten, and love forlorn."

ELEANORE.

Thy dark eyes opened not,
Nor first revealed themselves to English air
For there is nothing here,
Which, from the outward to the inward brought,
Moulded thy baby thought.
Far off from human neighborhood,
Thou wert born, on a summer morn,
A mile beneath the cedar-wood.
Thy bounteous forehead was not fanned
With breezes from our oaken glades,
But thou wert nursed in some delicious land
Of lavish lights, and floating shades :
And flattering thy childish thought
The oriental fairy brought,
At the moment of thy birth,

From old well-heads of haunted rills,
And the hearts of purple hills,
 And shadowed coves on a sunny shore,
 The choicest wealth of all the earth,
Jewel or shell, or starry ore,
 To deck thy cradle, Eleänore.

Or the yellow-banded bees, .
Through half-open lattices
Coming in the scented breeze,
 Fed thee, a child, lying alone,
 With whitest honey in fairy gardens culled —
 A glorious child, dreaming alone,
 In silk-soft folds, upon yielding down,
With the hum of swarming bees
 Into dreamful slumber lulled.

Who may minister to thee?
Summer herself should minister
 To thee, with fruitage golden-rinded
 On golden salvers, or it may be,
Youngest Autumn, in a bower
Grape-thickened from the light, and blinded
 With many a deep-hued bell-like flower

Of fragrant trailers, when the air
 Sleepeth over all the heaven,
 And the crag that fronts the Even,
 All along the shadowing shore,
 Crimsons over an inland mere,
 Eleänore !

How may full-sailed verse express,
 How may measured words adore
 The full-flowing harmony
 Of thy swan-like stateliness,
 Eleänore ?

The luxuriant symmetry
 Of thy floating gracefulness,
 Eleänore ?

Every turn and glance of thine,
 Every lineament divine,
 Eleänore,

And the steady sunset glow,
 That stays upon thee ? For in thee
 Is nothing sudden, nothing single ;
 Like two streams of incense free
 From one censer, in one shrine,
 Thought and motion mingle,
 Mingle ever. Motions flow

To one another, even as though
They were modulated so
 To an unheard melody,
Which lives about thee, and a sweep
 Of richest pauses, evermore
Drawn from each other mellow-deep ;
 Who may express thee, Eleänore ?

I stand before thee, Eleänore ;
 I see thy beauty gradually unfold,
Daily and hourly, more and more.
I muse, as in a trance, the while
 Slowly, as from a cloud of gold,
Comes out thy deep ambrosial smile.
I muse, as in a trance, whene'er
 The languors of thy love-deep eyes
Float on to me. I would I were
 So tranced, so rapt in ecstasies,
To stand apart, and to adore,
Gazing on thee for evermore,
Serene, imperial Eleänore !

Sometimes, with most intensity
Gazing, I seem to see
Thought folded over thought, smiling asleep,

Slowly awakened, grow so full and deep
 In thy large eyes, that, overpowered quite,
 I cannot veil, or droop my sight,
 But am as nothing in its light :
 As though a star, in inmost heaven set,
 Even while we gaze on it,
 Should slowly round his orb, and slowly grow
 To a full face, there like a sun remain
 Fixed — then as slowly fade again,
 And draw itself to what it was before ;
 So full, so deep, so slow,
 Thought seems to come and go
 In thy large eyes, imperial Eleänore.

As thunder-clouds that, hung on high,
 Roofed the world with doubt and fear,
 Floating through an evening atmosphere,
 Grow golden all about the sky ;
 In thee all passion becomes passionless,
 Touched by thy spirit's mellowness,
 Losing his fire and active might
 In a silent meditation,
 Falling into a still delight,
 And luxury of contemplation :

As waves that up a quiet cove
 Rolling slide, and lying still
 Shadow forth the banks at will ;
 Or sometimes they swell and move,
 Pressing up against the land,
 With motions of the outer sea :
 And the self-same influence
 Controlleth all the soul and sense
 Of Passion gazing upon thee.
 His bow-string slackened, languid Love,
 Leaning his cheek upon his hand,
 Droops both his wings, regarding thee,
 And so would languish evermore,
 Serene, imperial Eleänore.

But when I see thee roam, with tresses unconfined,
 While the amorous, odorous wind
 Breathes low between the sunset and the moon
 Or, in a shadowy saloon,
 On silken cushions half reclined ;
 I watch thy grace ; and in its place
 My heart a charmed slumber keeps,
 While I muse upon thy face ;
 And a languid fire creeps

Through my veins to all my frame,
Dissolvingly and slowly: soon,
From thy rose-red lips MY name
Floweth; and then, as in a swoon,
With dinning sound my ears are rife,
My tremulous tongue faltereth,
I lose my color, I lose my breath,
I drink the cup of a costly death,
Brimmed with delirious draughts of warmest life.
I die with my delight, before
Phear what I would hear from thee;
Yet tell my name again to me.
I *would* be dying evermore,
So dying ever, Eleänore.

THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER.

I SEE the wealthy miller yet,
His double chin, his portly size,
And who that knew him could forget
The busy wrinkles round his eyes?
The slow wise smile that, round about
His dusty forehead drily curled,
Seemed half-within and half-without,
And full of dealings with the world?

In yonder chair I see him sit,
Three fingers round the old silver cup—
I see his gray eyes twinkle yet
At his own jest—gray eyes lit up
With summer lightnings of a soul
So full of summer warmth, so glad,
So healthy, sound, and clear and whole,
His memory scarce can make me sad.

Yet fill my glass : give me one kiss :
My own sweet Alice, we must die.
There's somewhat in this world amiss
Shall be unriddled by and by.
There's somewhat flows to us in life,
But more is taken quite away.
Pray, Alice, pray, my darling wife,
That we may die the self-same day.

Have I not found a happy earth ?
I least should breathe a thought of pain.
Would God renew me from my birth
I'd almost live my life again.
So sweet it seems with thee to walk,
And once again to woo thee mine —
It seems in after-dinner talk
Across the walnuts and the wine —

To be the long and listless boy
Late left an orphan of the squire,
Where this old mansion mounted high
Looks down upon the village spire :
For even here, where I and you
Have lived and loved alone so long,
Each morn my sleep was broken through
By some wild skylark's matin song.

And oft I heard the tender dove
 In firry woodlands making moan ;
But ere I saw your eyes, my love,
 I had no motion of my own.
For scarce my life with fancy played
 Before I dreamed that pleasant dream —
Still hither thither idly swayed
 Like those long mosses in the stream.

Or from the bridge I leaned to hear
 The milldam rushing down with noise,
And see the minnows everywhere
 In crystal eddies glance and poise,
The tall flag-flowers, where they sprung
 Below the range of stepping stones,
And those three chestnuts near, that hung
 In masses thick with milky cones.

But, Alice, what an hour was that,
 When, after roving in the woods,
(’T was April then,) I came and sat
 Below the chestnuts, when their buds
Were glistening to the breezy blue ;
 And on the slope, an absent fool,
I cast me down, nor thought of you,
 But angled in the higher pool.

A love-song I had somewhere read,
An echo from a measured strain,
Beat time to nothing in the head
From some odd corner of the brain.
It haunted me, the morning long,
With weary sameness in the rhymes,
The phantom of a silent song,
That went and came a thousand times.

Then leapt a trout. In lazy mood
I watched the little circles die ;
They past into the level flood,
And there a vision caught my eye ;
The reflex of a beauteous form,
A glowing arm, a gleaming neck,
As when a sunbeam wavers warm
Within the dark and dimpled beck.

For you remember, you had set,
That morning, on the casement's edge
A long green box of mignonette,
And you were leaning from the ledge :
And when I raised my eyes, above
They met with two so full and bright—
Such eyes ! I swear to you, my love,
That these have never lost their light.

I loved, and love dispelled the fear
That I should die an early death :
For love possessed the atmosphere,
And filled the breast with purer breath.
My mother thought, What ails the boy ?
For I was altered, and began
To move about the house with joy,
And with the certain step of man.

I loved the brimming wave that swam
Through quiet meadows round the mill,
The sleepy pool above the dam,
The pool beneath it never still,
The meal-sacks on the whitened floor,
The dark round of the dripping wheel,
The very air about the door
Made misty with the floating meal.

And oft in ramblings on the wold,
When April nights began to blow,
And April's crescent glimmered cold,
I saw the village lights below ;
I knew your taper far away,
And full at heart of trembling hope,
From off the wold I came, and lay
Upon the freshly-flowered slope.

The deep brook groaned beneath the mill ;
And " by that lamp," I thought, " she sit !"
The white chalk-quarry from the hill
Gleamed to the flying moon by fits.
" O that I were beside her now !
O will she answer if I call ?
O would she give me vow for vow,
Sweet Alice, if I told her all ?"

Sometimes I saw you sit and spin ;
And, in the pauses of the wind,
Sometimes I heard you sing within ;
Sometimes your shadow crossed the blind ;
At last you rose and moved the light,
And the long shadow of the chair
Flitted across into the night,
And all the casement darkened there.

But when at last I dared to speak,
The lanes, you know, were white with May ;
Your ripe lips moved not, but your cheek
Flushed like the coming of the day ;
And so it was — half-sly, half-shy,
You would, and would not, little one !
Although I pleaded tenderly,
And you and I were all alone.

And slowly was my mother brought
To yield consent to my desire :
She wished me happy, but she thought
I might have looked a little higher ;
And I was young — too young to wed :
“ Yet must I love her for your sake ;
Go fetch your Alice here,” she said :
Her eyelid quivered as she spake.

And down I went to fetch my bride :
But, Alice, you were ill at ease ;
This dress and that by turns you tried,
Too fearful that you should not please.
I loved you better for your fears,
I knew you could not look but well ;
And dews, that would have fall'n in tears,
I kissed away before they fell.

I watched the little flutterings,
The doubt my mother would not see ;
She spoke at large of many things,
And at the last she spoke of me ;
And turning looked upon your face,
As near this door you sat apart,
And rose, and, with a silent grace
Approaching, pressed you heart to heart.

Ah, well — but sing the foolish song
I gave you, Alice, on the day
When, arm in arm, we went along,
A pensive pair, and you were gay
With bridal flowers — that I may seem,
As in the nights of old, to lie
Beside the mill-wheel in the stream,
While those full chestnuts whisper by.

It is the miller's daughter,
And she is grown so dear, so dear,
That I would be the jewel
That trembles at her ear :
For, hid in ringlets day and night,
I'd touch her neck so warm and white

And I would be the girdle
About her dainty, dainty waist,
And her heart would beat against me
In sorrow and in rest :
And I should know if it beat right,
I'd clasp it round so close and tight.

And I would be the necklace,
And all day long to fall and rise
Upon her balmy bosom,
With her laughter or her sighs,

And I would lie so light, so light,
I scarce should be unclasped at night.

A trifle, sweet! which true love spells —
True love interprets — right alone.
His light upon the letter dwells,
For all the spirit is his own.
So, if I waste words now, in truth
You must blame Love. His early rage
Had force to make me rhyme in youth,
And makes me talk too much in age.

And now those vivid hours are gone,
Like mine own life to me thou art,
Where Past and Present, wound in one,
Do make a garland for the heart :
So sing that other song I made,
Half-angered with my happy lot,
The day, when in the chestnut shade
I found the blue Forget-me-not.

Love that hath us in the net,
Can he pass, and we forget ?

Many suns arise and set.
Many a chance the years beget.
Love the gift is Love the debt.
Even so.
Love is hurt with jar and fret.
Love is made a vague regret.
Eyes with idle tears are wet.
Idle habit links us yet.
What is love ? for we forget :
Ah, no ! no !

Look through mine eyes with thine. True wife,
Round my true heart thine arms entwine ;
My other dearer life in life,
Look through my very soul with thine !
Untouched with any shade of years,
May those kind eyes forever dwell !
They have not shed a many tears,
Dear eyes, since first I knew them well.

Yet tears they shed : they had their part
Of sorrow : for when time was ripe,
The still affection of the heart
Became an outward breathing type,

That into stillness past again,
And left a want unknown before ;
Although the loss that brought us pain,
That loss but made us love the more,

With farther lookings on. The kiss,
The woven arms, seem but to be
Weak symbols of the settled bliss,
The comfort, I have found in thee :
But that God bless thee, dear — who wrought
Two spirits to one equal mind —
With blessings beyond hope or thought,
With blessings which no words can find.

Arise, and let us wander forth
To yon old mill across the wolds ;
For look, the sunset, south and north,
Winds all the vale in rosy folds,
And fires your narrow casement glass,
Touching the sullen pool below :
On the chalk-hill the bearded grass
Is dry and dewless. Let us go.

FATIMA.



L.

**O LOVE, Love, Love ! O withering might !
O sun, that from thy noonday height
Shudderest when I strain my sight,
Throbbing through all thy heat and light,
Lo, falling from my constant mind,
Lo, parched and withered, deaf and blind
I whirl like leaves in roaring wind.**

II.

**Last night I wasted hateful hours
Below the city's eastern towers :
I thirsted for the brooks, the showers :
I rolled among the tender flowers :
I crushed them on my breast, my mouth :
I looked athwart the burning drouth
Of that long desert to the south.**

III.

Last night, when some one spoke his name,
 From my swift blood that went and came
 A thousand little shafts of flame
 Were shivered in my narrow frame.

O Love, O fire ! once he drew
 With one long kiss my whole soul through
 My lips, as sunlight drinketh dew.

IV.

Before he mounts the hill, I know
 He cometh quickly : from below
 Sweet gales, as from deep gardens, blow
 Before him, striking on my brow.

In my dry brain my spirit soon,
 Down-deepening from swoon to swoon,
 Faints like a dazzled morning moon.

V.

The wind sounds like a silver wire,
 And from beyond the noon a fire
 Is poured upon the hills, and nigher
 The skies stoop down in their desire ;
 And, isled in sudden seas of light,
 My heart, pierced through with fierce delight,
 Bursts into blossom in his sight.

VI.

My whole soul waiting silently,
All naked in a sultry sky,
Droops blinded with his shining eye :
I *will* possess him or will die.

I will grow round him in his place,
Grow, live, die looking on his face
Die, dying clasped in his embrace.

CENONE.



THERE lies a vale in Ida, lovelier
Than all the valleys of Ionian hills.
The swimming vapor slopes athwart the glen,
Puts forth an arm, and creeps from pine to pine,
And loiters, slowly drawn. On either hand
The lawns and meadow-ledges midway down
Hang rich in flowers, and far below them roars
The long brook falling through the cloven ravine
In cataract after cataract to the sea.
Behind the valley topmost Gargarus
Stands up and takes the morning; but in front
The gorges, opening wide apart, reveal
Troas and Iliion's columned citadel,
The crown of Troas.

Hither came at noon
Mournful Cenone, wandering forlorn
Of Paris, once her playmate on the hills.

Her cheek had lost the rose, and round her neck
Floated her hair or seemed to float in rest.
She, leaning on a fragment twined with vine,
Sang to the stillness, till the mountain-shade
Sloped downward to her seat from the upper cliff.

“ O mother Ida, many-fountained Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
For now the noonday quiet holds the hill :
The grasshopper is silent in the grass :
The lizard, with his shadow on the stone,
Rests like a shadow, and the cicala sleeps.
The purple flowers droop : the golden bee
Is lily-cradled : I alone awake.
My eyes are full of tears, my heart of love,
My heart is breaking, and my eyes are dim,
And I am all aweary of my life.

“ O mother Ida, many fountained Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Hear me O Earth, hear me O Hills, O Caves,
That house the cold crowned snake ! O mountain brooks,
I am the daughter of a River-God ;
Hear me, for I will speak, and build up all

My sorrow with my song, as yonder walls
Rose slowly to a music slowly breathed, *As you see.*
 A cloud that gathered shape: for it may be
 That, while I speak of it, a little while
 My heart may wander from its deeper woe.

“O mother Ida, many-fountained Ida,
 Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 I waited underneath the dawning hills,
 Aloft the mountain lawn was dewy-dark,
 And dewy-dark aloft the mountain pine:
 Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris,
 Leading a jet-black goat white-horned, white-hooved,
 Came up from reedy Simois all alone.

“O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 Far-off the torrent called me from the cleft:
 Far up the solitary morning smote
 The streaks of virgin snow. With down-dropt eyes
 I sat alone: white breasted like a star
 Fronting the dawn he moved; a leopard skin
 Drooped from his shoulder, but his sunny hair
 Clustered about his temples like a God's;
 And his cheek brightened as the foam-bow brightens

When the wind blows the foam, and all my heart
Went forth to embrace him coming ere he came.

“ Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
He smiled, and opening out his milk-white palm
Disclosed a fruit of pure Hesperian gold,
That smelt ambrosially, and while I looked
And listened, the full-flowing river of speech
Came down upon my heart.

“ ‘ My own Cenone,
Beautiful-browed Cenone, my own soul,
Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind engraven
“ For the most fair,” would seem to award it thine,
As lovelier than whatever Oread haunt
The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all grace
Of movement, and the charm of married brows.’

“ Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
He prest the blossom of his lips to mine,
And added, ‘ This was cast upon the board,
When all the full-faced presence of the Gods
Ranged in the halls of Peleus; whereupon
Rose feua, with question unto whom ’t were due :

But light-foot Iris brought it yester-eve,
 Delivering that to me, by common voice
 Elected umpire. Here comes to-day
 Pallas and Aphrodite, claiming each
 This meed of fairest. Thou, within the cave
 Behind yon whispering tuft of oldest pine,
 Mayst well behold them unbeheld, unheard
 Hear all, and see thy Paris judge of Gods.'

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.

It was the deep midnight: one silvery cloud
 Had lost his way between the piney sides
 Of this long glen. Then to the bower they came,
 Naked they came to that smooth-swarded bower,
 And at their feet the crocus brake like fire,
 Violet, amaracus, and asphodel, *lily*
 Lotos and lilies: and a wind arose,
 And overhead the wandering ivy and vine,
 This way and that, in many a wild festoon
 Ran riot, garlanding the gnarled boughs
 With bunch and berry and flower through and through.

"O mother Ida, harken ere I die.

On the tree-tops a crested peacock lit, *you*

And o'er him flowed a golden cloud, and leaned
 Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant dew.
 Then first I heard the voice of her, to whom
 Coming through Heaven, like a light that grows
 Larger and clearer, with one mind the Gods
 Rise up for reverence. She to Paris made
 Proffer of royal power, ample rule
 Unquestioned, overflowing revenue
 Wherewith to embellish state, 'from many a vale
 And river-sundered champaign clothed with corn,
 Or labored mines, undrainable of ore.
 Honor,' she said, 'and homage, tax and toll,
 From many an inland town and haven large,
 Mast-thronged beneath her shadowing citadel
 In glassy bays among her tallest towers.'

"O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 Still she spake on, and still she spake of power,
 'Which in all action is the end of all;
 Power fitted to the season; wisdom-bred
 And throned of wisdom — from all neighbor crowns
 Alliance and allegiance, till thy hand
 Fail from the sceptre-staff. Such boon from me,
 From me, Heaven's Queen, Paris, to thee king-born,

A shepherd all thy life, but yet king-born,
 Should come most welcome, seeing men, in power
 Only, are likest Gods, who have attained
 Rest in a happy place and quiet seats
 Above the thunder, with undying bliss,
 In knowledge of their own supremacy.'

" Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 She ceased, and Paris held the costly fruit
 Out at arm's-length, so much the thought of power
 Flattered his spirit; but Pallas where she stood
 Somewhat apart, her clear and bared limbs
 O'erthwarted with the brazen-headed spear
 Upon her pearly shoulder leaning cold,
 The while, above, her full and earnest eye
 Over her snow-cold breast and angry cheek
 Kept watch, waiting decision, made reply.

" ' Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,
 These three alone lead life to sovereign power.
 Yet not for power, (power of herself
 Would come uncalled for,) but to live by law,
 Acting the law we live by without fear;
 And because right is right, to follow right
 Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence.'

“Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die,
Again she said: ‘I woo thee not with gifts.
Sequel of guerdon could not alter me
To fairer. Judge thou me by what I am,
So shalt thou find me fairest.

Yet, indeed,
If gazing on divinity disrobed,
Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge of fair,
Unbiased by self-profit, oh! rest thee sure
That I shall love thee well and cleave to thee,
So that my vigor, wedded to thy blood,
Shall strike within thy pulses, like a God’s,
To push thee forward through a life of shocks,
Dangers, and deeds, until endurance grow
Sinewed with action, and the full-grown will,
Circled through all experiences, pure law,
Commeasure perfect freedom.’

“Here she ceased
And Paris pondered, and I cried, ‘O Paris,
Give it to Pallas!’ but he heard me not,
Or hearing would not hear me, woe is me!

“ O mother Ida, many-fountained Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Idalian Aphrodite beautiful,
Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in Paphian wells,
With rosy slender fingers backward drew
From her warm brows and bosom her deep hair
Ambrosial, golden round her lucid throat
And shoulder: from the violets her light foot
Shone rosy-white, and o'er her rounded form
Between the shadows of the vine-bunches
Floated the glowing sunlights, as she moved.

“ Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
She with a subtle smile in her mild eyes,
The herald of her triumph, drawing nigh,
Half-whispered in his ear, ‘ I promise thee
The fairest and most loving wife in Greece.’
She spoke and laughed: I shut my sight for fear:
But when I looked, Paris had raised his arm,
And I beheld great Here's angry eyes,
As she withdrew into the golden cloud,
And I was left alone within the bower;
And from that time to this I am alone,
And I shall be alone until I die.

“ Yet, mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Fairest — why fairest wife ? am I not fair ?
My love hath told me so a thousand times.
Methinks I must be fair, for yesterday,
When I past by, a wild and wanton pard,
Eyed like the evening star, with playful tail
Crouched fawning in the weed. Most loving is she ?
Ah me, my mountain shepherd, that my arms
Were wound about thee, and my hot lips prest
Close, close to thine in that quick-falling dew
Of fruitful kisses, thick as Autumn rains
Flash in the pools of whirling Simois.

“ O mother, hear me yet before I die.
They came, they cut away my tallest pines,
My dark tall pines, that plumed the craggy ledge
High over the blue gorge, and all between
The snowy peak and snow-white cataract
Fostered the callow eaglet — from beneath
Whose thick mysterious boughs in the dark morn
The panther's roar came muffled, while I sat
Low in the valley. Never, never more
Shall lone CEnone see the morning mist
Sweep through them ; never see them overlaid

With narrow moon-lit slips of silver cloud,
Between the loud stream and the trembling stars.

“O mother, hear me yet before I die.
I wish that somewhere in the ruined folds,
Among the fragments tumbled from the glens,
Or the dry thickets, I could meet with her,
The Abominable, that uninvited came
Into the fair Peleïan banquet-hall,
And cast the golden fruit upon the board,
And bred this change ; that I might speak my mind,
And tell her to her face how much I hate
Her presence, hated both of Gods and men.

“O mother, hear me yet before I die.
Hath he not sworn his love a thousand times,
In this green valley, under this green hill,
Even on this hand, and sitting on this stone ?
Sealed it with kisses ? watered it with tears ?
O happy tears, and how unlike to these !
O happy Heaven, how canst thou see my face ?
O happy earth, how canst thou bear my weight ?
O death, death, death, thou ever-floating cloud,
There are enough unhappy on this earth ;

Pass by the happy souls, that love to live :
I pray thee pass before my light of life,
And shadow all my soul, that I may die.
Thou weighest heavy on the heart within,
Weigh heavy on my eyelids : let me die.

“ O mother, hear me yet before I die.
I will not die alone, for fiery thoughts
Do shape themselves within me more and more,
Whereof I catch the issue, as I hear
Dead sounds at night come from the inmost hills,
Like footsteps upon wool. I dimly see
My far-off doubtful purpose, as a mother
Conjectures of the features of her child
Ere it is born : her child ! — a shudder comes
Across me : never child be born of me,
Unblest, to vex me with his father's eyes !

“ O mother, hear me yet before I die.
Hear me, O earth. I will not die alone,
Lest their shrill happy laughter come to me
Walking the cold and starless road of Death
Uncomforted, leaving my ancient love
With the Greek woman. I will rise and go

Down into Troy, and ere the stars come forth
Talk with the wild Cassandra, for she says
A fire dances before her, and a sound
Rings ever in her ears of armed men.
What this may be I know not, but I know
That, wheresoe'er I am by night and day,
All earth and air seem only burning fire."

THE SISTERS.



I.

WE were two daughters of one race :
She was the fairest in the face :
 The wind is blowing in turret and tree.
They were together, and she fell ;
Therefore revenge became me well.
 O the Earl was fair to see !

II.

She died : she went to burning flame :
She mixed her ancient blood with shame.
 The wind is howling in turret and tree.
Whole weeks and months, and early and late,
To win his love I lay in wait.
 O the Earl was fair to see !

III.

I made a feast ; I bade him come :
I won his love, I brought him home.
 The wind is roaring in turret and tree.
And after supper, on a bed,
Upon my lap he laid his head :
 O the Earl was fair to see !

IV.

I kissed his eyelids into rest :
His ruddy cheek upon my breast.
 The wind is raging in turret and tree.
I hated him with the hate of hell,
But I loved his beauty passing well.
 O the Earl was fair to see !

V.

I rose up in the silent night :
I made my dagger sharp and bright.
 The wind is raving in turret and tree.
As half-asleep his breath he drew,
Three times I stabbed him through and through.
 O the Earl was fair to see !

VI.

I curled and combed his comely head,
He looked so grand when he was dead.

The wind is blowing in turret and tree.
I wrapt his body in the sheet,
And laid him at his mother's feet.

O the Earl was fair to see !

TO——

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM.



I SEND you here a sort of allegory,
(For you will understand it,) of a soul,
A sinful soul possessed of many gifts,
A spacious garden full of flowering weeds,
A glorious Devil, large in heart and brain,
That did love Beauty only, (Beauty seen
In all varieties of mould and mind,)
And Knowledge for its beauty ; or if Good,
Good only for its beauty, seeing not
That Beauty, Good, and Knowledge, are three sisters
That dote upon each other, friends to man,
Living together under the same roof,
And never can be sundered without tears.

And he that shuts Love out, in turn shall be
Shut out from Love, and on her threshold lie
Howling in outer darkness. Not for this
Was common clay ta'en from the common earth,
Moulded by God, and tempered with the tears
Of angels to the perfect shape of man.

THE PALACE OF ART.

I BUILT my soul a lordly pleasure-house,
Wherein at ease for aye to dwell,
I said, "O Soul, make merry and carouse,
Dear soul, for all is well."

A huge crag-platform, smooth as burnished brass,
I chose. The ranged ramparts bright
From level meadow-bases of deep grass
Suddenly scaled the light.

Thereon I built it firm. Of ledge or shelf
 The rock rose clear, or winding stair.
 My soul would live alone unto herself
 In her high palace there.

And "while the world runs round and round," I said,
 "Reign thou apart, a quiet king,
 Still as, while Saturn whirls, his steadfast shade
 Sleeps on his luminous ring."

To which my soul made answer readily:
 "Trust me, in bliss I shall abide
 In this great mansion, that is built for me,
 So royal-rich and wide."

* * * *
 * * * *

Four courts I made, East and West, South and North,
 In each a squared lawn, wherefrom
 The golden gorge of dragons spouted forth
 A flood of fountain-foam.

And round the cool green courts there ran a row
 Of cloisters, branched like mighty woods,
 Echoing all night to that sonorous flow
 Of spouted fountain-floods.

And round the roofs a gilded gallery
That lent broad verge to distant lands,
Far as the wild swan wings, to where the sky
Dipt down to sea and sands.

From those four jets four currents in one swell
Across the mountain streamed below
In misty folds, that floating as they fell
Lit up a torrent-blow.

And high on every peak a statue seemed
To hang on tiptoe, tossing up
A cloud of incense of all odor steamed
From out a golden cup.

So that she thought, "And who shall gaze upon
My palace with unblinded eyes,
While this great bow will waver in the sun,
And that sweet incense rise?"

For that sweet incense rose and never failed,
And, while day sank or mounted higher,
The light aerial gallery, golden-railed,
Burnt like a fringe of fire.

Likewise the deep-set windows, stained and traced,
 Would seem slow-flaming crimson fires
 From shadowed grotts of arches interlaced,
 And tipt with frost-like spires.

* * * * *
 * * * * *

Full of long-sounding corridors it was,
 That over-vaulted grateful gloom,
 Through which the livelong day my soul did pass,
 Well-pleased, from room to room.

Full of great rooms and small the palace stood,
 All various, each a perfect whole
 From living Nature, fit for every mood
 And change of my still soul.

For some were hung with arras green and blue,
 Showing a gaudy summer-morn,
 Where with puffed cheek the belted hunter blew
 His wreathed bugle-horn.

One seemed all dark and red — a tract of sand,
 And some one pacing there alone,
 Who paced forever in a glimmering land,
 Lit with a low large moon.

One showed an iron coast and angry waves.
You seemed to hear them climb and fall
And roar rock-thwarted under bellowing caves
Beneath the windy wall.

And one, a full-fed river winding slow
By herds upon an endless plain,
The ragged rims of thunder brooding low,
With shadow-streaks of rain.

And one, the reapers at their sultry toil.
In front they bound the sheaves. Behind
Were realms of upland, prodigal in oil,
And hoary to the wind.

And one, a foreground black with stones and slags,
Beyond a line of heights, and higher
All barred with long white cloud the scornful crags,
And highest, snow and fire.

And one, an English home—gray twilight poured
On dewy pastures, dewy trees,
Softer than sleep—all things in order stored,
A haunt of ancient Peace.

Nor these alone, but every landscape fair,
 As fit for every mood of mind,
 Or gay, or grave, or sweet, or stern, was there,
 Not less than truth designed.

* * * * *
 * * * * *

Or the maid-mother by a crucifix,
 In tracts of pasture sunny-warm,
 Beneath branch-work of costly sardonyx
 Sat smiling, babe in arm.

Or in a clear-walled city on the sea,
 Near gilded organ-pipes, her hair
 Wound with white roses, slept St. Cecily;
 An angel looked at her.

Or thronging all one porch of Paradise,
 A group of Houris bowed to see
 The dying Islamite, with hands and eyes
 That said, we wait for thee.

Or mythic Uther's deeply-wounded son
 In some fair space of sloping greens
 Lay, dozing in the vale of Avalon,
 And watched by weeping queens.

Or hollowing one hand against his ear,
To list a footfall, ere he saw
The wood-nymph, stayed the 'Tuscan king to hear
Of wisdom and of law.

Or over hills with peaky tops engrailed,
And many a tract of palm and rice,
The throne of Indian Cama slowly sailed
A summer fanned with spice.

Or sweet Europa's mantle blew unclasped
From off her shoulder backward borne:
From one hand drooped a crocus: one hand grasped
The mild bull's golden horn.

Or else flushed Ganymede, his rosy thigh
Half-buried in the Eagle's down,
Sole as a flying star shot through the sky
Above the pillared town.

Nor these alone: but every legend fair
Which the supreme Caucasian mind
Carved out of Nature for itself, was there,
Not less than life, designed.

* * * * *
* * * * *

Then in the towers I placed great bells that swung,
Moved of themselves, with silver sound ;
And with choice paintings of wise men I hung
The royal dais round.

For there was Milton like a seraph strong,
Beside him Shakspeare bland and mild ;
And there the world-worn Dante grasped his song,
And somewhat grimly smiled.

And there the Ionian father of the rest ;
A million wrinkles carved his skin ;
A hundred winters snowed upon his breast,
From cheek and throat and chin.

Above, the fair hall-ceiling stately-set
Many an arch high up did lift,
And angels rising and descending met
With interchange of gift.

Below was all mosaic choicely planned
With cycles of the human tale
Of this wide world, the times of every land
So wrought, they will not fail.

The people here, a beast of burden slow,
Toiled onward, pricked with goads and stings ;
Here played, a tiger, rolling to and fro
The heads and crowns of kings ;

Here rose, an athlete, strong to break or bind
All force in bonds that might endure,
And here once more like some sick man declined,
And trusted any cure.

But over these she trod : and those great bells
Began to chime. She took her throne :
She sat betwixt the shining Oriels,
To sing her songs alone.

And through the topmost Oriels' colored flame
Two godlike faces gazed below :
Plato the wise, and large-browed Verulam,
The first of those who know.

And all those names, that in their motion were
Full-welling fountain-heads of change,
Betwixt the slender shafts were blazoned fair
In diverse raiment strange :

Through which the lights, rose, amber, emerald, blue,
Flushed in her temples and her eyes,
And from her lips, as morn from Memnon, drew
Rivers of melodies.

No nightingale delighteth to prolong
Her low preamble all alone,
More than my soul to hear her echoed song
Throb through the ribbed stone ;

Singing and murmuring in her feastful mirth,
Joying to feel herself alive,
Lord over Nature, Lord of the visible earth,
Lord of the senses five ;

Communing with herself : " All these are mine,
And let the world have peace or wars,
'T is one to me." She — when young night divine
Crowned dying day with stars,

Making sweet close of his delicious toils —
Lit light in wreaths and anadems,
And pure quintessences of precious oils
In hollowed moons of gems,

To mimic heaven ; and clapt her hands and cried,
 " I marvel if my still delight
 In this great house so royal-rich, and wide,
 Be flattered to the height.

" From shape to shape at first within the womb
 The brain is modelled," she began,
 " And through all phases of all thought I come
 Into the perfect man.

" All Nature widens upward. Evermore
 The simpler essence lower lies :
 More complex is more perfect, owning more
 Discourse, more widely wise."

Then of the moral instinct would she prate,
 And of the rising from the dead,
 As hers by right of full-accomplished Fate ;
 And at the last she said :

" I take possession of men's minds and deeds
 I live in all things great and small.
 I sit apart holding no forms of creeds,
 But contemplating all."

* * * *

Full oft the riddle of the painful earth
Flashed through her as she sat alone,
But not the less held she her solemn mirth,
And intellectual throne

Of full-sphered contemplation. So three years
She throve, but on the fourth she fell,
Like Herod, when the shout was in his ears,
Struck through with pangs of hell.

Lest she should fail and perish utterly,
God, before whom ever lie bare
The abysmal deeps of Personality,
Plagued her with sore despair.

When she would think, where'er she turned her sight,
The airy hand confusion wrought,
Wrote "Mene, mene," and divided quite
The kingdom of her thought.

Deep dread and loathing of her solitude
Fell on her, from which mood was born
Scorn of herself; again, from out that mood
Laughter at her self-scorn.

Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,
Stood sunset-flushed : and, dewed with showery drops,
Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.

III.

The charmed sunset lingered low adown
In the red West : through mountain clefts the dale
Was seen far inland, and the yellow down
Bordered with palm, and many a winding vale
And meadow, set with slender galingale ;
A land where all things always seemed the same !
And round about the keel with faces pale,
Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,
The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters came.

IV.

Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,
Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave
To each, but whoso did receive of them,
And taste, to him the gushing of the wave
Far, far away did seem to mourn and rave
On alien shores ; and if his fellow spake,
His voice was thin, as voices from the grave ;
And deep-asleep he seemed, yet all awake,
And music in his ears his beating heart did make.

v.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand,
Between the sun and moon upon the shore ;
And sweet it was to dream of Father-land,
Of child, and wife, and slave ; but evermore
Most weary seemed the sea, weary the oar,
Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.
Then some one said, " We will return no more ;"
And all at once they sang, " Our island home
Is far beyond the wave ; we will no longer roam."

CHORIC SONG.

1.

There is sweet music here that softer falls
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,
Or night-dews on still waters between walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass ;
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies
Than tired eyelids upon tired eyes ;
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful
skies.

“What ! is not this my place of strength,” she said,
“My spacious mansion built for me,
Whereof the strong foundation-stones were laid
Since my first memory ?”

But in dark corners of her palace stood
Uncertain shapes ; and unawares
On white-eyed phantasms weeping tears of blood,
And horrible nightmares,

And hollow shades enclosing hearts of flame,
And, with dim fretted foreheads all,
On corpses three-months-old at noon she came,
That stood against the wall.

A spot of dull stagnation, without light
Or power of movement, seemed my soul,
Mid onward-sloping motions infinite
Making for one sure goal.

A still salt pool, locked in with bars of sand ;
Left on the shore ; that hears all night
The plunging seas draw backward from the land
Their moon-led waters white.

A star that with the choral starry dance
 Joined not, but stood, and standing saw
The hollow orb of moving Circumstance
 Rolled round by one fixed law.

Back on herself her serpent pride had curled.
 " No voice," she shrieked in that lone hall,
" No voice breaks through the stillness of this world :
 One deep, deep silence all ! "

She, mouldering with the dull earth's mouldering sod,
 Inwrapt tenfold in slothful shame,
Lay there exiled from eternal God,
 Lost to her place and name ;

And death and life she hated equally,
 And nothing saw, for her despair,
But dreadful time, dreadful eternity,
 No comfort anywhere ;

Remaining utterly confused with fears,
 And ever worse with growing time,
And ever unrelieved by dismal tears,
 And all alone in crime :

Shut up as in a crumbling tomb, girt round
With blackness as a solid wall,
Far off she seemed to hear the dully sound
Of human footsteps fall.

As in strange lands a traveller walking slow,
In doubt and great perplexity,
A little before moon-rise hears the low
Moan of an unknown sea ;

And knows not if it be thunder or a sound
Of stones thrown down, or one deep cry
Of great wild beasts ; then thinketh, "I have found
A new land, but I die."

She howled aloud, "I am on fire within.
There comes no murmur of reply.
What is it that will take away my sin,
And save me lest I die ?"

So when four years were wholly finished,
She threw her royal robes away.
"Make me a cottage in the vale," she said,
"Where I may mourn and pray.

“ Yet pull not down my palace towers, that are
So lightly, beautifully built :
Perchance I may return with others there
When I have purged my guilt.”

LADY CLARA VERE DE VERE.

LADY Clara Vere de Vere,

Of me you shall not win renown ;
You thought to break a country heart
For pastime, ere you went to town.
At me you smiled, but unbeguiled
I saw the snare, and I retired :
The daughter of a hundred Earls,
You are not one to be desired.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,

I know you proud to bear your name ;
Your pride is yet no mate for mine,
Too proud to care from whence I came.
Nor would I break for your sweet sake
A heart that dotes on truer charms.
A simple maiden in her flower
Is worth a hundred coats-of-arms.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
Some meeker pupil you must find,
For were you queen of all that is,
I could not stoop to such a mind.
You sought to prove how I could love,
And my disdain is my reply.
The lion on your old stone gates
Is not more cold to you than I.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
You put strange memories in my head.
Not thrice your branching limes have blown
Since I beheld young Laurence dead.
O your sweet eyes, your low replies :
A great enchantress you may be ;
But there was that across his throat
Which you had hardly cared to see.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
When thus he met his mother's view,
She had the passions of her kind,
She spake some certain truths of you.
Indeed, I heard one bitter word
That scarce is fit for you to hear ;
Her manners had not that repose
Which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,

There stands a spectre in your hall :
The guilt of blood is at your door :
You changed a wholesome heart to gall.
You held your course without remorse,
To make him trust his modest worth,
And, last, you fixed a vacant stare,
And slew him with your noble birth.

Trust me, Clara Vere de Vere,

From yon blue heavens above us bent
The grand old gardener and his wife
Smile at the claims of long descent.
Howe'er it be, it seems to me,
'T is only noble to be good.
Kind hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman blood.

I know you, Clara Vere de Vere :

You pine among your halls and towers ,
The languid light of your proud eyes
Is wearied of the rolling hours.
In glowing health, with boundless wealth,
But sickening of a vague disease,
You know so ill to deal with time,
You needs must play such pranks as these

Clara, Clara Vere de Vere,
If Time be heavy on your hands,
Are there no beggars at your gate,
Nor any poor about your lands ?
O ! teach the orphan-boy to read,
Or teach the orphan-girl to sew,
Pray Heaven for a human heart,
And let the foolish yeoman go.

THE MAY QUEEN.

I.

You must wake and call me early, call me early, mother
dear ;
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all the glad New-
year ;
Of all the glad New-year, mother, the maddest, merriest
day ;
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be
Queen o' the May.

II.

There's many a black, black eye, they say, but none so
bright as mine ;
There's Margaret and Mary, there's Kate and Caroline ;
But none so fair as little Alice in all the land, they say ;
So I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be
Queen o' the May.

III.

I sleep so sound all night, mother, that I shall never
wake,
If you do not call me loud when the day begins to break:
But I must gather knots of flowers, and buds and garlands
gay,
For I 'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I 'm to be
Queen o' the May.

IV.

As I came up the valley, whom think ye should I see,
But Robin leaning on the bridge beneath the hazel-tree?
He thought of that sharp look, mother, I gave him
yesterday, —
But I 'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I 'm to be
Queen o' the May.

V.

He thought I was a ghost, mother, for I was all in white,
And I ran by him without speaking, like a flash of light.
They call me cruel-hearted, but I care not what they say,
For I 'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I 'm to be
Queen o' the May.

VI.

They say he 's dying all for love, but that can never be .
They say his heart is breaking, mother — what is that
to me ?

There 's many a bolder lad 'ill woo me any summer day,
And I 'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I 'm to be
Queen o' the May.

VII.

Little Effie shall go with me to-morrow to the green,
And you 'll be there, too, mother, to see me made the
Queen :

For the shepherd lads on every side 'ill come from far
away,
And I 'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I 'm to be
Queen o' the May.

VIII.

The honeysuckle round the porch has woven its wavy
bowers,
And by the meadow-trenches blow the faint sweet
cuckoo-flowers ;
And the wild marsh-marigold shines like fire in swamps
and hollows gray,
And I 'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I 'm to be
Queen o' the May.

IX.

The night-winds come and go, mother, upon the meadow-
grass,
And the happy stars above them seem to brighten as
they pass;
There will not be a drop of rain the whole of the livelong
day,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be
Queen o' the May.

X.

All the valley, mother, 'ill be fresh and green and still,
And the cowslip and the crowfoot are over all the hill,
And the rivulet in the flowery dale 'ill merrily glance
and play,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be
Queen o' the May.

XI.

So you must wake and call me early, call me early,
mother dear,
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all the glad
New-year:
To-morrow 'ill be of all the year the maddest, merriest
day,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be
Queen o' the May.

NEW YEAR'S EVE.



I.

If you 're waking call me early, call me early, mother
dear,
For I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-year.
It is the last New-year that I shall ever see,
Then you may lay me low i' the mould, and think no
more of me.

II.

To-night I saw the sun set: he set and left behind
The good old year, the dear old time, and all my peace
of mind ;
And the New-year's coming up, mother, but I shall
never see
The blossom on the blackthorn, the leaf upon the tree.

III.

Last May we made a crown of flowers : we had a
merry day ;
Beneath the hawthorn on the green they made me
Queen of May ;
And we danced about the May-pole and in the hazel
copse,
Till Charles's Wain came out above the tall white
chimney-tops.

IV.

There 's not a flower on all the hills : the frost is on the
pane :
I only wish to live till the snowdrops come again :
I wish the snow would melt and the sun come out on
high :
I long to see a flower so before the day I die.

V.

The building rook 'ill caw from the windy tall elm-tree,
And the tufted plover pipe along the fallow lea,
And the swallow 'ill come back again with summer o'er
the wave,
But I shall lie alone, mother, within the mouldering
grave.

VI.

Upon the chancel-casement, and upon that grave of
mine,
In the early, early morning the summer sun 'ill shine,
Before the red cock crows from the farm upon the hill,
When you are warm-asleep, mother, and all the world
is still.

VII.

When the flowers come again, mother, beneath the
waning light
You 'll never see me more in the long gray fields at
night;
When from the dry dark wold the summer airs blow
cool
On the oat-grass and the sword-grass, and the bulrush in
the pool.

VIII.

You 'll bury me, my mother, just beneath the hawthorn
shade,
And you 'll come sometimes and see me where I am
lowly laid.
I shall not forget you, mother, I shall hear you when
you pass,
With your feet above my head in the long and pleasant
grass.

IX.

I have been wild and wayward, but you'll forgive me
now ;
You'll kiss me, my own mother, upon my cheek and
brow ;
Nay, nay, you must not weep, nor let your grief be wild,
You should not fret for me, mother, you have another
child.

X.

If I can I'll come again, mother, from out my resting-
place ;
Though you'll not see me, mother, I shall look upon
your face ;
Though I cannot speak a word, I shall hearken what you
say,
And be often, often with you when you think I'm far
away.

XI.

Good-night, good-night, when I have said good-night
forevermore,
And you see me carried out from the threshold of the
door ;
Don't let Effie come to see me till my grave be growing
green :
She'll be a better child to you than ever I have been.

XII.

She'll find my garden-tools upon the granary floor :
Let her take 'em : they are hers : I shall never garden
more :
But tell her, when I'm gone, to train the rose-bush
that I set
About the parlor-window and the box of mignonette.

XIII.

Good-night, sweet mother : call me before the day is
born.
All night I lie awake, but I fall asleep at morn ;
But I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-year,
So, if you're waking, call me, call me early, mother
dear.

CONCLUSION.



I.

I THOUGHT to pass away before, and yet alive I am ;
And in the fields all round I hear the bleating of the
lamb.

How sadly, I remember, rose the morning of the year !
To die before the snowdrop came, and now the violet's
here.

II.

O sweet is the new violet, that comes beneath the skies,
And sweeter is the young lamb's voice to me that cannot
rise,

And sweet is all the land about, and all the flowers that
blow,

And sweeter far is death than life to me that long to go.

III.

It seemed so hard at first, mother, to leave the blessed
sun,
And now it seems as hard to stay; and yet, His will be
done!
But still I think it can't be long before I find release;
And that good man, the clergyman, has told me words
of peace.

IV.

O blessings on his kindly voice and on his silver hair!
And blessings on his whole life long, until he meet me
there!
O blessings on his kindly heart and on his silver head!
A thousand times I blest him, as he knelt beside my bed.

V.

He showed me all the mercy, for he taught me all the
sin.
Now, though my lamp was lighted late, there 's One
will let me in:
Nor would I now be well, mother, again, if that could
be,
For my desire is but to pass to Him that died for me.

VI.

I did not hear the dog howl, mother, or the death-watch
beat,
There came a sweeter token when the night and morning
meet :
But sit beside my bed, mother, and put your hand in
mine,
And Effie on the other side, and I will tell the sign.

VII.

All in the wild March-morning I heard the angels call ;
It was when the moon was setting, and the dark was
over all ;
The trees began to whisper, and the wind began to roll,
And in the wild March-morning I heard them call my
soul.

VIII.

For lying broad awake I thought of you and Effie
dear ;
I saw you sitting in the house, and I no longer here ;
With all my strength I prayed for both, and so I felt
resigned,
And up the valley came a swell of music on the wind.

IX.

I thought that it was fancy, and I listened in my bed,
And then did something speak to me—I know not
what was said;
For great delight and shuddering took hold of all my
mind,
And up the valley came again the music on the wind.

X.

But you were sleeping; and I said, "It's not for them:
it's mine."
And if it comes three times, I thought, I take it for a
sign.
And once again it came, and close beside the window-
bars,
Then seemed to go right up to Heaven and die among
the stars.

XI.

So now I think my time is near. I trust it is. I know
The blessed music went that way my soul will have
to go.
And for myself, indeed, I care not if I go to-day,
But, Effie, you must comfort *her* when I am past away.

XII.

And say to Robin a kind word, and tell him not to fret ;
There's many worthier than I would make him happy
yet.

If I had lived — I cannot tell — I might have been his
wife ;

But all these things have ceased to be, with my desire
of life.

XIII.

O look ! the sun begins to rise, the heavens are in a
glow ;

He shines upon a hundred fields, and all of them I know.
And there I move no longer now, and there his light
may shine —

Wild flowers in the valley for other hands than mine.

XIV.

O sweet and strange it seems to me, that ere this day is
done

The voice that now is speaking may be beyond the sun —
Forever and forever with those just souls and true —

And what is life, that we should moan ? why make we
such ado ?

XV.

Forever and forever, all in a blessed home —

And there to wait a little while till you and Effie
come —

To lie within the light of God, as I lie upon your
breast —

And the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary
are at rest.

THE LOTOS-EATERS.

I.

“COURAGE!” he said, and pointed toward the land;
“This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon.”
In the afternoon they came unto a land,
In which it seemed always afternoon.
All round the coast the languid air did swoon,
Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.
Full-faced above the valley stood the moon;
And like a downward smoke, the slender stream
Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.

II.

A land of streams! some, like a downward smoke,
Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go;
And some through wavering lights and shadows broke,
Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.
They saw the gleaming river seaward flow
From the inner land: far off, three mountain-tops,

Here are cool mosses deep,
And through the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

C. u.

2.

Why are we weighed upon with heaviness,
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,
While all things else have rest from weariness?
All things have rest: why should we toil alone,
We only toil, who are the first of things,
And make perpetual moan,
Still from one sorrow to another thrown:
Nor ever fold our wings,
And cease from wanderings,
Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm;
Nor hearken what the inner spirit sings,
"There is no joy but calm!"
Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things!

3.

Lo! in the middle of the wood,
The folded leaf is wooed from out the bud
With winds upon the branch, and there

Grows green and broad, and takes no care,
 Sun-steeped at noon, and in the moon
 Nightly dew-fed; and turning yellow
 Falls, and floats adown the air.
 Lo! sweetened with the summer light,
 The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,
 Drops in a silent autumn night.
 All its allotted length of days,
 The flower ripens in its place,
 Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,
 Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

4.

e
 Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
 Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.
 Death is the end of life; ah! why
 Should life all labor be?
 Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
 And in a little while our lips are dumb.
 Let us alone. What is it that will last?
 All things are taken from us, and become
 Portions and parcels of the dreadful Past.
 Let us alone. What pleasure can we have
 To war with evil? Is there any peace
 In ever climbing up the climbing wave?

All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave,
In silence ripen, fall and cease :
Give us long rest or death, dark death or dreamful ease !

8

5.

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,
With half-shut eyes ever to seem
Falling asleep in a half-dream !
To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,
Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height ;
To hear each other's whispered speech ;
Eating the Lotos, day by day,
To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,
And tender curving lines of creamy spray :
To lend our hearts and spirits wholly
To the influence of mild-minded melancholy ;
To muse and brood and live again in memory,
With those old faces of our infancy
Heaped over with a mound of grass,
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass !

6.

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,
And dear the last embraces of our wives

And their warm tears : but all hath suffered change ;
 For surely now our household hearths are cold :
 Our sons inherit us : our looks are strange :
 And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.
 Or else the island princes, over-bold
 Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings
 Before them of the ten-years' war in Troy,
 And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things.
 Is there confusion in the little isle ?

Let what is broken so remain.

The Gods are hard to reconcile :

'T is hard to settle order once again.

There *is* confusion worse than death,

Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,

Long labor unto aged breath,

Sore task to hearts worn out with many wars,

And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot-stars.

7.

But, propt on beds of amaranth and moly,
 How sweet (while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly,)
 With half-dropt eyelids still,
 Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
 To watch the long bright river drawing slowly

His waters from the purple hill —
To hear the dewy echoes calling
From cave to cave through the thick-twined vine —
To hear the emerald-colored water falling
Through many a woven acanthus-wreath divine!
Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,
Only to hear were sweet, stretched out beneath the pine.

8.

The Lotos blooms below the flowery peak :
The Lotos blows by every winding creek :
All day the wind breathes low with mellower tone :
Through every hollow cave and alley lone
Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotos-dust
is blown.

We have had enough of action, and of motion we,
Rolled to starboard, rolled to larboard, when the surge
was seething free,
Where the wallowing monster spouted his foam-foun-
tains in the sea.

Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,
In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined
On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind.
For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are hurled

Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are
lightly curled

Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming
world;

Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,
Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring deeps
and fiery sands,

Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships,
and praying hands.

But they smile, they find a music centred in a doleful
song

Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of wrong,
Like a tale of little meaning, though the words are strong;
Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave the soil,
Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring toil,
Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine and oil;
Till they perish and they suffer—some, 't is whis-
pered—down in hell

Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian valleys dwell,
Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel.

Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the shore
Than labor in the deep mid-ocean, wind and wave and
oar;

O rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander more.

A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN.

I.

I READ, before my eyelids dropt their shade,
 “*The Legend of Good Women*,” long ago
Sung by the morning star of song, who made
 His music heard below ;

II.

Dan Chaucer, the first warbler, whose sweet breath
 Preluded those melodious bursts, that fill
The spacious times of great Elizabeth
 With sounds that echo still.

III.

And, for a while, the knowledge of his art
 Held me above the subject, as strong gales
Hold swollen clouds from raining, though my heart,
 Brimful of those wild tales,

IV.

Charged both mine eyes with tears. In every land
I saw, wherever light illumineth,
Beauty and anguish walking hand in hand
The downward slope to death.

V.

Those far-renowned brides of ancient song
Peopled the hollow dark, like burning stars,
And I heard sounds of insult, shame and wrong,
And trumpets blown for wars ;

VI.

And clattering flints battered with clanging hoofs :
And I saw crowds in columned sanctuaries ;
And forms that passed at windows and on roofs
Of marble palaces ;

VII.

Corpses across the threshold ; heroes tall
Dislodging pinnacle and parapet
Upon the tortoise creeping to the wall ;
Lancers in ambush set ;

VIII.

And high shrine-doors burst through with heated blasts
That run before the fluttering tongues of fire ;
White surf wind-scattered over sails and masts ,
And ever climbing higher ;

IX.

Squadrons and squares of men in brazen-plates,
Scaffolds, still sheets of water, divers woes,
Ranges of glimmering vaults with iron grates,
And hushed seraglios.

X.

So shape chased shape as swift as, when to land
Bluster the winds and tides the self-same way,
Crisp foam-flakes scud along the level sand,
Torn from the fringe of spray.

XI.

I started once, or seemed to start, in pain,
Resolved on noble things, and strove to speak,
As when a great thought strikes along the brain,
And flushes all the cheek.

XII.

And once my arm was lifted to hew down
A cavalier from off his saddle-bow,
That bore a lady from a leaguered town ;
And then, I know not how,

XIII.

All those sharp fancies, by down-lapsing thought
Streamed onward, lost their edges, and did creep
Rolled on each other, rounded, smoothed, and brought
Into the gulfs of sleep.

XIV.

At last methought that I had wandered far
In an old wood : fresh-washed in coolest dew,
The maiden splendors of the morning star
Shook in the steadfast blue.

XV.

Enormous elm-tree boles did stoop and lean
Upon the dusky brushwood underneath
Their broad curved branches, fledged with clearest green
New from its silken sheath.

XVI.

The dim red morn had died, her journey done,
And with dead lips smiled at the twilight plain,
Half-fallen across the threshold of the sun,
Never to rise again.

XVII.

There was no motion in the dumb dead air,
Not any song of bird or sound of rill;
Gross darkness of the inner sepulchre
Is not so deadly still

XVIII.

As that wide forest. Growths of jasmine turned
Their humid arms festooning tree to tree,
And at the root through lush green grasses burned
The red anemone.

XIX.

I knew the flowers, I knew the leaves, I knew
The tearful glimmer of the languid dawn
On those long, rank, dark wood-walks drenched in dew
Leading from lawn to lawn.

XX.

The smell of violets, hidden in the green,
Poured back into my empty soul and frame
The times when I remember to have been
Joyful and free from blame.

XXI.

And from within me a clear under-tone
Thrilled through mine ears in that unblissful clime,
"Pass freely through! the wood is all thine own,
Until the end of time."

XXII.

At length I saw a lady within call,
Stilller than chiselled marble, standing there;
A daughter of the gods, divinely tall,
And most divinely fair.

XXIII.

Her loveliness with shame and with surprise
Froze my swift speech; she turning on my face
The star-like sorrows of immortal eyes,
Spoke slowly in her place.

XXIV.

"I had great beauty : ask thou not my name :
No one can be more wise than destiny.
Many drew swords and died. Where'er I came
I brought calamity."

XXV.

"No marvel, sovereign lady !' in fair field,
Myself for such a face had boldly died,"
I answered free, and turning I appealed
To one that stood beside.

XXVI.

But she, with sick and scornful looks averse,
To her full height her stately stature draws ;
"My youth," she said, "was blasted with a curse :
This woman was the cause.

XXVII.

"I was cut off from hope in that sad place,
Which yet to name my spirit loathes and fears :
My father held his hand upon his face :
I, blinded with my tears,

XXVIII.

“ Still strove to speak : my voice was thick with sighs
As in a dream. Dimly I could descry
The stern black-bearded kings with wolfish eyes,
Waiting to see me die.

XXIX.

“ The high masts flicker'd as they lay afloat ;
The crowds, the temples, waver'd, and the shore ;
The bright death quiver'd at the victim's throat ;
Touch'd ; and I knew no more.”

XXX.

Whereto the other with a downward brow :
“ I would the white cold heavy-plunging foam,
Whirled by the wind, had rolled me deep below,
Then when I left my home.”

XXXI.

Her slow full words sank through the silence drear,
As thunder-drops fall on a sleeping sea :
Sudden I heard a voice that cried, “ Come here,
That I may look on thee.”

XXXII.

I turning saw, throned on a flowery rise,
 One sitting on a crimson scarf unrolled ;
A queen with swarthy cheeks and bold black eyes
 Brow-bound with burning gold.

XXXIII.

She, flashing forth a haughty smile, began :
 “ I governed men by change, and so I swayed
All moods. 'T is long since I have seen a man.
 Once, like the moon, I made

XXXIV.

“ The ever-shifting currents of the blood
 According to my humor ebb and flow.
I have no men to govern in this wood :
 That makes my only woe.

XXXV.

“ Nay—yet it chafes me that I could not bend
 One will ; nor tame and tutor with mine eye
That dull cold-blooded Cæsar. Prithee, friend,
 Where is Mark Antony ?

XXXVI.

“The man my lover, with whom I rode sublime
On Fortune’s neck : we sat as God by God :
The Nilus would have risen before his time
And flooded at our nod.

XXXVII.

“We drank the Lybian Sun to sleep, and lit
Lamps which outburned Canopus. O my life
In Egypt ! O the dalliance and the wit,
The flattery and the strife,

XXXVIII.

“And the wild kiss, when fresh from war’s alarms,
My Hercules, my Roman Antony,
My mailed Bacchus leapt into my arms,
Contented there to die !

XXXIX.

“And there, he died ; and when I heard my name
Sighed forth with life I would not brook my fear
Of the other : with a worm I balked his fame.
What else was left ? — look here !”

XL.

(With that she tore her robe apart, and half
The polished argent of her breast to sight
Laid bare. Thereto she pointed with a laugh,
Showing the aspick's bite :)

XLI.

"I died a Queen. The Roman soldier found
Me lying dead, my crown about my brows,
A name forever! — lying robed and crowned,
Worthy a Roman spouse."

XLII.

Her warbling voice, a lyre of widest range
Struck by all passion, did fall down and glance
From tone to tone, and glided through all change
Of liveliest utterance.

XLIII.

When she made pause I knew not for delight ;
Because with sudden motion from the ground
She raised her piercing orbs and filled with light
The interval of sound.

XLIV.

Still with their fires Love tipt his keenest darts ;
As once they drew into two burning rings
All beams of Love, melting the mighty hearts
Of captains and of kings.

XLV.

Slowly my sense undazzled. Then I heard
A noise of some one coming through the lawn,
And singing clearer than the crested bird,
That claps his wings at dawn.

XLVI.

"The torrent brooks of hallowed Israel
From craggy hollows pouring, late and soon,
Sound all night long, in falling through the dell,
Far-heard beneath the moon.

XLVII.

"The balmy moon of blessed Israel
Floods all the deep-blue gloom with beams divine
All night the splintered crags that wall the dell
With spires of silver shine."

XLVIII.

As one that museth where broad sunshine laves
The lawn by some cathedral, through the door
Hearing the holy organ rolling waves
Of sound on roof and floor

XLIX.

Within, and anthem sung, is charmed and tied
To where he stands, — so stood I, when that flow
Of music left the lips of her that died
To save her father's vow ;

L.

The daughter of the warrior Gileadite,
A maiden pure ; as when she went along
From Mizpeh's towered gate with welcome light,
With timbrel and with song.

LL.

My words leapt forth : " Heaven heads the count of crimes
With that wild oath." She rendered answer high :
" Not so, nor once alone ; a thousand times
I would be born and die.

LII.

“ Single I grew, like some green plant, whose root
 Creeps to the garden water-pipes beneath,
Feeding the flower : but ere my flower to fruit
 Changed, I was ripe for death.

LIII.

“ My God, my land, my father — these did move
 Me from my bliss of life, that Nature gave,
Lowered softly with a threefold chord of love
 Down to a silent grave.

LIV

“ And I went mourning, ‘ No fair Hebrew boy
 Shall smile away my maiden blame among
The Hebrew mothers, ’ — emptied of all joy,
 Leaving the dance and song,

LV.

“ Leaving the olive-gardens far below,
 Leaving the promise of my bridal bower,
The valleys of grape-loaded vines that glow
 Beneath the battled tower.

LVI.

“The light white cloud swam over us. Anon
We heard the lion roaring from his den ;
We saw the large white stars rise one by one,
Or, from the darkened glen,

LVII.

“Saw God divide the night with flying flame,
And thunder on the everlasting hills.
I heard Him, for He spake, and grief became
A solemn scorn of ills.

LVIII.

“When the next moon was rolled into the sky,
Strength came to me that equalled my desire.
How beautiful a thing it was to die
For God and for my sire!

LIX.

“It comforts me in this one thought to dwell,
That I subdued me to my father's will ;
Because the kiss he gave me, ere I fell,
Sweetens the spirit still.

LX.

“Moreover, it is written that my race
Hewed Ammon, hip and thigh, from Aroer
On Arnon unto Minneth.” Here her face
Glowed, as I looked at her.

LXI.

She locked her lips: she left me where I stood:
“Glory to God,” she sang, and past afar,
Thridding the sombre boskage of the wood,
Toward the morning-star.

LXII.

Losing her carol I stood pensively,
As one that from a casement leans his head
When midnight bells cease ringing suddenly,
And the old year is dead.

LXIII.

“Alas! alas!” a low voice, full of care,
Murmured beside me; “Turn and look on me:
I am that Rosamond, whom men call fair,
If what I was I be.

LXIV.

“ Would I had been some maiden coarse and poor !
O me ! that I should ever see the light !
Those dragon eyes of angered Eleanor
Do hunt me, day and night.”

LXV.

She ceased in tears, fallen from hope and trust :
To whom the Egyptian : “ O, you tamely died !
You should have clung to Fulvia’s waist, and thrust
The dagger through her side.”

LXVI.

With that sharp sound the white dawn’s creeping beams,
Stolen to my brain, dissolved the mystery
Of folded sleep. The captain of my dreams
Ruled in the eastern sky.

LXVII.

Morn broadened on the borders of the dark,
Ere I saw her who clasped in her last trance
Her murdered father’s head, or Joan of Arc.
A light of ancient France ;

LXVIII.

Or her, who knew that Love can vanquish Death,
Who kneeling, with one arm about her king,
Drew forth the poison with her balmy breath,
Sweet as new buds in Spring.

LXIX.

No memory labors longer from the deep
Gold-mines of thought to lift the hidden ore
That glimpses, moving up, than I from sleep
To gather and tell o'er

LXX.

Each little sound and sight. With what dull pain
Compassed, how eagerly I sought to strike
Into that wondrous track of dreams again!
But no two dreams are like.

LXXI.

As when a soul laments, which hath been blest,
Desiring what is mingled with past years,
In yearnings that can never be exprest
By signs or groans or tears ;

LXXII.

Because all words, though culled with choicest art,
Failing to give the bitter of the sweet,
Wither beneath the palate, and the heart
Faints, faded by its heat.

MARGARET.

O SWEET pale Margaret,
O rare pale Margaret,
What lit your eyes with tearful power,
Like moonlight on a falling shower?
Who lent you, love, your mortal dower
Of pensive thought and aspect pale,
Your melancholy, sweet and frail
As perfume of the cuckoo-flower?
From the westward-winding flood,
From the evening-lighted wood,
From all things outward you have won
A tearful grace, as though you stood
Between the rainbow and the sun.

The very smile before you speak,
That dimples your transparent cheek,
Encircles all the heart, and feedeth
The senses with a still delight

Of dainty sorrow without sound,
Like the tender amber round,
Which the moon about her spreadeth,
Moving through a fleecy night.

You love, remaining peacefully,
To hear the murmur of the strife,
But enter not the toil of life.
Your spirit is the calmed sea,
Laid by the tumult of the fight.
You are the evening star, always
Remaining betwixt dark and bright :
Lulled echoes of laborious day
Come to you, gleams of mellow light
Float by you on the verge of night.

What can it matter, Margaret,
What songs below the waning stars
The lion-heart, Plantagenet,
Sang looking through his prison bars ?
Exquisite Margaret, who can tell
The last wild thought of Chatelet,
Just ere the falling axe did part
The burning brain from the true heart,
Even in her sight he loved so well ?

A fairy shield your Genius made
 And gave you on your natal day
Your sorrow, only sorrow's shade,
 Keeps real sorrow far away.
You move not in such solitudes,
 You are not less divine,
But more human in your moods,
 Than your twin-sister, Adeline.
Your hair is darker, and your eyes
 Touched with a somewhat darker hue,
 And less aërially blue,
 but ever trembling through the dew
Of dainty-woful sympathies.

O sweet pale Margaret,
O rare pale Margaret,
 Come down, come down, and hear me speak :
 Tie up the ringlets on your cheek :
The sun is just about to set.
The arching limes are tall and shady,
 And faint, rainy lights are seen,
 Moving in the leavy beech.
Rise from the feast of sorrow, lady,
 Where all day long you sit between
 Jov and woe, and whisper each.

Or only look across the lawn,
Look out below your bower-eaves,
Look down, and let your blue eyes dawn
Upon me through the jasmine-leaves.

THE BLACKBIRD.

O BLACKBIRD ! sing me something well :
While all the neighbors shoot thee round,
I keep smooth plats of fruitful ground,
Where thou may'st warble, eat and dwell.

The espaliers and the standards all
Are thine ; the range of lawn and park :
The unnetted blackhearts ripen dark,
All thine, against the garden wall.

Yet, though I spared thee kith and kin,
Thy sole delight is, sitting still,
With that gold dagger of thy bill
To fret the summer jennetin.

A golden bill ! the silver tongue,
Cold February loved, is dry :
Plenty corrupts the melody
That made thee famous once, when young :

And in the sultry garden-squares,
Now thy flute-notes are changed to coarse,
I hear thee not at all, or hoarse
As when a hawker hawks his wares.

Take warning! he that will not sing
While yon sun prospers in the blue,
Shall sing for want, ere leaves are new,
Caught in the frozen palms of Spring.

THE
DEATH OF THE OLD YEAR.

I.

FULL knee-deep lies the winter snow,
And the winter winds are wearily sighing
Toll ye the church-bell sad and slow,
And tread softly and speak low,
For the old year lies a-dying.

Old year, you must not die ;
You came to us so readily,
You lived with us so steadily,
Old year, you shall not die.

II.

He lieth still : he doth not move :
He will not see the dawn of day.
He hath no other life above.
He gave me a friend, and a true true-love,
And the New-year will take 'em away.

Old year, you must not go ;
So long as you have been with us,
Such joy as you have seen with us,
Old year, you shall not go.

III.

He frothed his bumpers to the brim ;
A jollier year we shall not see.
But though his eyes are waxing dim,
And though his foes speak ill of him,
He was a friend to me.

Old year, you shall not die ;
We did so laugh and cry with you,
I've half a mind to die with you,
Old year, if you must die.

IV.

He was full of joke and jest,
But all his merry quips are o'er.
To see him die, across the waste
His son and heir doth ride post-haste,
But he'll be dead before.

Every one for his own.
The night is starry and cold, my friend,
And the New-year, blithe and bold, my friend,
Comes up to take his own.

V.

How hard he breathes ! over the snow
I heard just now the crowing cock.
The shadows flicker to and fro :
The cricket chirps : the light burns low :
'T is nearly twelve o'clock.
 Shake hands, before you die.
 Old year, we 'll dearly rue for you :
 What is it we can do for you ?
 Speak out before you die.

VI.

His face is growing sharp and thin.
Alack ! our friend is gone.
Close up his eyes : tie up his chin :
Step from the corpse, and let him in
That standeth there alone,
 And waiteth at the door.
 There 's a new foot on the floor, my friend,
 And a new face at the door, my friend,
 A new face at the door.

To J. S.



I.

THE wind, that beats the mountain, blows
More softly round the open wold,
And gently comes the world to those
That are cast in gentle mould.

II.

And me this knowledge bolder made,
Or else I had not dared to flow
In these words toward you, and invade
Even with a verse your holy woe.

III.

'T is strange that those we lean on most,
Those in whose laps our limbs are nursed,
Fall into shadow, soonest lost :
Those we love first are taken first.

IV.

God gives us love. Something to love
He lends us ; but, when love is grown
To ripeness, that on which it throve
Falls off, and love is left alone.

V.

This is the curse of time. Alas !
In grief I am not all unlearned,
Once through mine own doors Death did pass,
One went, who never hath returned.

VI.

He will not smile — not speak to me
Once more. Two years his chair is seen
Empty before us. That was he
Without whose life I had not been.

VII.

Your loss is rarer ; for this star
Rose with you through a little arc
Of heaven, nor having wandered far,
Shot on the sudden into dark.

VIII.

I knew your brother : his mute dust
I honor, and his living worth :
A man more pure and bold and just
Was never born into the earth.

IX.

I have not looked upon you nigh,
Since that dear soul hath fallen asleep.
Great Nature is more wise than I :
I will not tell you not to weep.

X.

And though my own eyes fill with dew,
Drawn from the spirit through the brain,
I will not even preach to you,
“Weep, weeping dulls the inward pain.”

XI.

Let Grief be her own mistress still.
She loveth her own anguish deep
More than much pleasure. Let her will
Be done — to weep or not to weep.

XII.

I will not say "God's ordinance
Of Death is blown in every wind ;"
For that is not a common chance
That takes away a noble mind.

XIII.

His memory long will live alone
In all our hearts, as mournful light
That broods above the fallen sun,
And dwells in heaven half the night.

XIV.

Vain solace! Memory standing near
Cast down her eyes, and in her throat
Her voice seemed distant, and a tear
Dropt on the letters as I wrote.

XV.

I wrote I know not what. In truth,
How *should* I soothe you anyway,
Who miss the brother of your youth?
Yet something I did wish to say :

XVI.

For he too was a friend to me :
Both are my friends, and my true breast
Bleedeth for both ; yet it may be
That only silence suiteth best.

XVII.

Words weaker than your grief would make
Grief more. 'T were better I should cease
Although myself could almost take
The place of him that sleeps in peace :

XVIII.

Sleep sweetly, tender heart, in peace :
Sleep, holy spirit, blessed soul,
While the stars burn, the moons increase,
And the great ages onward roll.

XIX.

Sleep till the end, true soul and sweet.
Nothing comes to thee new or strange.
Sleep full of rest from head to feet ;
Lie still, dry dust, secure of change.

You ask me, why, though ill at ease,
 Within this region I subsist,
 Whose spirits falter in the mist,
And languish for the purple seas ?

It is the land that freemen till,
 That sober-suited Freedom chose,
 The land where, girt with friends or foes,
A man may speak the thing he will ;

A land of settled government,
 A land of just and old renown,
 Where Freedom broadens slowly down
From precedent to precedent :

Where faction seldom gathers head,
 But by degrees to fulness wrought,
 The strength of some diffusive thought
Hath time and space to work and spread.

Should banded unions persecute
 Opinion, and induce a time
 When single thought is civil crime,
 And individual freedom mute ;

Though Power should make from land to land
 The name of Britain trebly great –
 Though every channel of the State
 Should almost choke with golden sand –

Yet waft me from the harbor-mouth,
 Wild wind! I seek a warmer sky,
 And I will see before I die
 The palms and temples of the South.

Or old sat Freedom on the heights,
The thunders breaking at her feet :
Above her shook the starry lights :
She heard the torrents meet.

Within her place she did rejoice,
Self-gathered in her prophet-mind,
But fragments of her mighty voice
Came rolling on the wind.

Then stept she down through town and field
To mingle with the human race,
And part by part to men revealed
The fulness of her face —

Grave mother of majestic works,
From her isle-altar gazing down,
Who, God-like, grasps the triple forks,
And, King-like, wears the crown :

Her open eyes desire the truth.
The wisdom of a thousand years
Is in them. May perpetual youth
Keep dry their light from tears ;

That her fair form may stand and shine,
Make bright our days and light our dreams,
Turning to scorn with lips divine
The falsehood of extremes !

Love thou thy land, with love far brought
From out the storied Past, and used
Within the Present, but transfused
Through future time by power of thought.

True love turned round on fixed poles,
Love that endures not sordid ends,
For English natures, freemen, friends,
Thy brothers and immortal souls.

But pamper not a hasty time,
Nor feed with crude imaginings
The herd, wild hearts and feeble wings,
That every sophister can lime.

Deliver not the tasks of might
To weakness, neither hide the ray
From those, not blind, who wait for day,
Though sitting girt with doubtful light.

Make knowledge circle with the winds ;
 But let her herald, Reverence, fly
 Before her to whatever sky
 Bear seed of men and growth of minds.

Watch what main-currents draw the years :
 Cut Prejudice against the grain :
 But gentle words are always gain :
 Regard the weakness of thy peers :

Nor toil for title, place, or touch
 Of pension, neither count on praise :
 It grows to guerdon after-days :
 Nor deal in watchwords overmuch ;

Not clinging to some ancient saw :
 Not mastered by some modern term ;
 Not swift nor slow to change, but firm :
 And in its season bring the law ;

That from Discussion's lip may fall
 With Life, that, working strongly, binds —
 Set in all lights by many minds,
 To close the interests of all.

For Nature also, cold and warm,
 And moist and dry, devising long,
 Through many agents making strong,
 Matures the individual form.

Meet is it changes should control
 Our being, lest we rust in ease.
 We all are changed by still degrees,
 All but the basis of the soul.

So let the change which comes be free
 To ingroove itself with that, which flies,
 And work, a joint of state, that plies
 Its office, moved with sympathy.

A saying hard to shape in act;
 For all the past of Time reveals
 A bridal dawn of thunder-peals,
 Wherever Thought hath wedded Fact.

Even now we hear with inward strife
 A motion toiling in the gloom —
 The Spirit of the years to come
 Yearning to mix himself with Life.

A slow-developed strength awaits
 Completion in a painful school;
 Phantoms of other forms of rule,
 New Majesties of mighty States —

The warders of the growing hour,
 But vague in vapor, hard to mark;
 And round them sea and air are dark
 With great contrivances of Power.

Of many changes, aptly joined,
 Is bodied forth the second whole.
 Regard gradation, lest the soul
 Of Discord race the rising wind:

A wind to puff your idol-fires,
 And heap their ashes on the head;
 To shame the boast so often made,
 That we are wiser than our sires.

O yet, if Nature's evil star
 Drive men in manhood, as in youth,
 To follow flying steps of Truth
 Across the brazen bridge of war —

If New and Old, disastrous feud,
 Must ever shock, like armed foes,
 And this be true, till Time shall close,
 That Principles are rained in blood ;

Not yet the wise of heart would cease
 To hold his hope through shame and guilt,
 But with his hand against the hilt,
 Would pace the troubled land, like Peace ;

Not less, though dogs of Faction bay,
 Would serve his kind in deed and word,
 Certain, if knowledge bring the sword,
 That knowledge takes the sword away—

Would love the gleams of good that broke
 From either side, nor veil his eyes :
 And if some dreadful need should rise,
 Would strike, and firmly, and one stroke :

To-morrow yet would reap to-day,
 As we bear blossom of the dead ;
 Earn well the thrifty months, nor wed
 Raw Haste, half-sister to Delay.

THE GOOSE.



I.

I KNEW an old wife lean and poor.
Her rags scarce held together ;
There strode a stranger to the door
And it was windy weather.

II.

He held a goose upon his arm,
He uttered rhyme and reason
"Here, take the goose, and keep you warm,
It is a stormy season."

III.

She caught the white goose by the leg,
A goose — 't was no great matter.
The goose let fall a golden egg
With cackle and with clatter.

IV.

She dropt the goose, and caught the pelf,
And ran to tell her neighbors ;
And blessed herself, and cursed herself,
And rested from her labors.

V.

And feeding high, and living soft,
Grew plump and able-bodied ;
Until the grave churchwarden doffed,
The parson smirked and nodded.

VI.

So sitting, served by man and maid,
She felt her heart grow prouder :
But ah ! the more the white goose laid,
It clacked and cackled louder.

VII.

It cluttered here, it chuckled there ;
It stirred the old wife's mettle :
She shifted in her elbow-chair,
And hurled the pan and kettle.

VIII.

"A quinsy choke thy cursed note!"
Then waxed her anger stronger.
"Go, take the goose, and wring her throat,
I will not bear it longer."

IX.

Then yelped the cur, and yawled the cat;
Ran Gaffer, stumbled Gammer.
The goose flew this way and flew that,
And filled the house with clamor.

X.

As head and heels upon the floor
They floundered all together,
There strode a stranger to the door,
And it was windy weather:

XI.

He took the goose upon his arm,
He uttered words of scorning;
"So keep you cold, or keep you warm,
It is a stormy morning."

XII.

The wild wind rang from park and plain,
And round the attics rumbled,
Till all the tables danced again,
And half the chimneys tumbled.

XIII.

The glass blew in, the fire blew out,
The blast was hard and harder.
Her cap blew off, her gown blew up,
And a whirlwind cleared the larder.

XIV.

And while on all sides breaking loose
Her household fled the danger,
Quoth she, "The Devil take the goose,
And God forget the stranger!"

THE EPIC.

At Francis Allen's on the Christmas-eve, —
The game of forfeits done — the girls all kissed
Beneath the sacred bush and past away —
The parson Holmes, the poet Everard Hall,
The host and I, sat round the wassail-bowl,
Then half-way ebbed : and there we held a talk,
How all the old honor had from Christmas gone,
Or gone, or dwindled down to some odd games
In some odd nooks like this ; till I, tired out
With cutting eights that day upon the pond,
Where, three times slipping from the outer edge,
I bumped the ice into three several stars,
Fell in a doze ; and half-awake I heard
The parson taking wide and wider sweeps,
Now harping on the church-commissioners,
Now hawking at Geology and schism ;
Until I woke, and found him settled down
Upon the general decay of faith

Right through the world — “ at home was little left,
And none abroad : there was no anchor, none,
To hold by.” Francis, laughing, clapt his hand
On Everard’s shoulder, with “ I hold by him.”
“ And I,” quoth Everard, “ by the wassail-bowl.”
“ Why yes,” I said, “ we knew your gift that way
At college : but another which you had,
I mean of verse, (for so we held it then,)
What came of that ? ” “ You know,” said Frank, “ he hung
His epic of King Arthur in the fire ! ”
And then to me demanding why ? “ O, sir,
He thought that nothing new was said, or else
Something so said ’t was nothing — that a truth
Looks freshest in the fashion of the day :
God knows : he has a mint of reasons : ask.
It pleased *me* well enough.” “ Nay, nay,” said Hall,
“ Why take the style of those heroic times ?
For nature brings not back the Mastodon,
Nor we those times ; and why should any man
Remodel models ? these twelve books of mine
Were faint Homeric echoes, nothing worth,
Mere chaff and draff, much better burnt.” “ But I,”
Said Francis, “ picked the eleventh from this hearth,
And have it : keep a thing, its use will come.
I hoard it as a sugar-plum for Holmes.”

He laughed, and I, though sleepy, like a horse
That hears the corn-bin open, pricked my ears ;
For I remembered Everard's college fame
When we were Freshmen : then at my request
He brought it ; and the poet, little urged,
But with some prelude of disparagement,
Read, mouthing out his hollow oes and aes,
Deep-chested music, and to this result.

MORTE D'ARTHUR.

So all day long the noise of battle rolled
Among the mountains by the winter sea ;
Until King Arthur's table, man by man,
Had fallen in Lyonness about their Lord,
King Arthur : then, because his wound was deep,
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
A broken chancel with a broken cross,
That stood on a dark strait of barren land.

On one side lay the Ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :

“ The sequel of to-day unsolders all
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep
They sleep — the men I loved. I think that we
Shall never more, at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,
Walking about the gardens and the halls
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
I perish by this people which I made, —
Though Merlin sware that I should come again
To rule once more — but let what will be, be,
I am so deeply smitten through the helm
That without help I cannot last till morn.
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,
Which was my pride : for thou rememberest how
In those old days, one summer noon, an arm
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
Holding the sword — and how I rowed across
And took it, and have worn it, like a king :
And, wheresoever I am sung or told
In aftertime, this also shall be known :

But now delay not: take Excalibur,
And fling him far into the middle meer:
Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me word."

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:

"It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,
Aidless, alone, and smitten through the helm.
A little thing may harm a wounded man.
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word."

So saying, from the ruined shrine he stept,
And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down
By zig-zag paths, and juts of pointed rock,
Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth
And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt:
For all the haft twinkled with diamond studs,
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long
That both his eyes were dazzled, as he stood
This way and that dividing the swift mind,

In act to throw ; but at the last it seemed
Better to leave Excalibur concealed
There in the many-knotted waterflags,
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.
So strode he back slow to the wounded King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :
“ Hast thou performed my mission which I gave ?
What is it thou hast seen ? or what hast heard ? ”

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :
“ I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the crag. ”

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale :
“ Thou hast betrayed thy nature and thy name,
Not rendering true answer, as beseemed
Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight :
For surer sign had followed, either hand,
Or voice, or else a motion of the meer.
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing
I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me word. ”

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time,
Counting the dewy pebbles, fixed in thought ;
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,
How curiously and strangely chased, he smote
His palms together, and he cried aloud.

“ And if indeed I cast the brand away,
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,
Should thus be lost forever from the earth,
Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.
What good should follow this, if this were done ?
What harm, undone ? deep harm to disobey,
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.
Were it well to obey then, if a king demand
An act unprofitable, against himself ?
The king is sick, and knows not what he does.
What record, or what relic of my lord
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath
And rumors of a doubt ? but were this kept,
Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,
Some one might show it at a joust of arms,
Saying, ‘ King Arthur’s sword, Excalibur,
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake.
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps
Upon the hidden bases of the hills.’
So might some old man speak in the aftertime
To all the people, winning reverence.
But now much honor and much fame were lost.’
So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,
And hid Excalibur the second time,
And so strode back slow to the wounded King

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily :
"What is it thou hast seen ? or what hast heard ?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :
"I heard the water lapping on the crag,
And the long ripple washing in the reeds."

To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath :
"Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,
Unknightly, traitor-hearted ! Woe is me !
Authority forgets a dying king,
Laid widowed of the power in his eye
That bowed the will. I see thee what thou art.
For thou, the latest left of all my knights,
In whom should meet the offices of all,
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt ;
Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
And the third time may prosper, get thee hence :
But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
I will arise and slay thee with my hands."

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged
Among the bulrush-beds, and clutched the sword,
And strongly wheeled and threw it. The great brand
Made lightnings in the splendor of the moon,

And flashing round and round, and whirled in an arch,
Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock
By night, with noises of the northern sea.
So flashed and fell the brand Excalibur :
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
And caught him by the hilt, and brandished him
Three times, and drew him under in the meer.
And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath :
“ Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.
Speak out : what is it thou hast heard, or seen ! ”

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :
“ Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems
Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,
Not though I live three lives of mortal men,
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.

Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him ;
But when I looked again, behold an arm,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
That caught him by the hilt, and brandished him
Three times, and drew him under in the meer.”

And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard :

“ My end draws nigh ; 't is time that I were gone.
Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,
And bear me to the margin ; yet I fear
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die.”

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
Remorsefully regarded through his tears,
And would have spoken, but he found not words,
Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,
And rising bore him through the place of tombs.

But, as he walked, King Arthur panted hard,
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed
When all the house is nute. So sighed the King,
Muttering and murmuring at his ear, “ Quick, quick !
I fear it is too late, and I shall die.”

But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,
Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walked,
Larger than human on the frozen hills.
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry
Before. His own thought drove him like a goad.
Dry clashed his harness in the icy caves
And barren chasms, and all to left and right

The bare black cliff clanged round him, as he based
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels—
And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,
And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,
Beneath them; and descending they were ware
That all the decks were dense with stately forms
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream—by these
Three Queens with crowns of gold—and from them rose
A cry that shivered to the tingling stars,
And, as it were one voice, an agony
Of lamentation, like a wind, that shrills
All night in a waste land, where no one comes,
Or hath come, since the making of the world.
Then murmured Arthur, "Place me in the barge,"
And to the barge they came. There those three Queens
Put forth their hands, and took the King, and wept.
But she that rose the tallest of them all
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,
And loosed the shattered casque, and chafed his hands,
And called him by his name, complaining loud,
And dropping bitter tears against his brow
Striped with dark blood: for all his face was white
And colorless, and like the withered moon

Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east ;
And all his greaves and cuisses dashed with drops
Of onset ; and the light and lustrous curls —
That made his forehead like a rising sun
High from the dais-throne — were parched with dust ;
Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,
Mixed with the knightly growth that fringed his lips.
So like a shattered column lay the King ;
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,
From spur to plume a star of tournament,
Shot through the lists at Camelot, and charged
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere,
“ Ah ! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go ?
Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes ?
For now I see the true old times are dead,
When every morning brought a noble chance,
And every chance brought out a noble knight.
Such times have been not since the light that led
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.
But now the whole ROUND TABLE is dissolved
Which was an image of the mighty world ;
And I, the last, go forth companionless,
And the days darken round me, and the years,
Among new men, strange faces, other minds.”

And slowly answered Arthur from the barge :

“The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.
Comfort thyself : what comfort is in me ?
I have lived my life, and that which I have done
May He within himself make pure ! but thou,
If thou shouldst never see my face again,
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend ?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.
But now farewell. I am going a long way
With these thou seest — if indeed I go —
(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)
To the island-valley of the Avilion ;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly ; but it lies
Deep-meadowed, happy, fair with orchard-lawns
And bowery hollows crowned with summer sea,
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound.”

So said he, and the barge with oar and sail
Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan,
That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere
Revolving many memories, till the hull
Looked one black dot against the verge of dawn,
And on the meer the wailing died away.

Here ended Hall, and our last light, that long
Had winked and threatened darkness, flared and fell ;
At which the Parson, sent to sleep with sound,
And waked with silence, grunted " Good ! " but we
Sat rapt : it was the tone with which he read —
Perhaps some modern touches here and there
Redeemed it from the charge of nothingness —
Or else we loved the man, and prized his work ;
I know not : but we sitting, as I said,
The cock crew loud : as at that time of year
The lusty bird takes every hour for dawn :
Then Francis, muttering, like a man ill-used,
There now — that 's nothing ! " drew a little back,
And drove his heel into the smouldered log,
That sent a blast of sparkles up the flue :

And so to bed ; where yet in sleep I seemed
To sail with Arthur under looming shores,
Point after point, till on to dawn, when dreams
Begin to feel the truth and stir of day,
To me, methought, who waited with a crowd,
There came a bark that, blowing forward, bore
King Arthur, like a modern gentleman
Of stateliest port ; and all the people cried,
“ Arthur is come again : he cannot die.”
Then those that stood upon the hills behind
Repeated — “ Come again, and thrice as fair ;”
And, further inland, voices echoed — “ Come
With all good things, and war shall be no more.”
At this a hundred bells began to peal,
That with the sound I woke, and heard indeed
The clear church-bells ring in the Christmas morn.

THE GARDENER'S DAUGHTER;

OR

THE PICTURES.

THIS morning is the morning of the day
When I and Eustace from the city went
To see the Gardener's Daughter ; I and he,
Brothers in Art ; a friendship so complete
Portioned in halves between us, that we grew
The fable of the city where we dwelt.

My Eustace might have sat for Hercules ;
So muscular he spread, so broad a breast.
He, by some law that holds in love, and draws
The greater to the lesser, long desired
A certain miracle of symmetry,
A miniature of loveliness, all grace
Summed up and closed in little ; — Juliet, she
So light of foot, so light of spirit — oh, she

To me myself, for some three careless moons,
The summer pilot of an empty heart
Unto the shores of nothing! Know you not
Such touches are but embassies of love,
To tamper with the feelings, ere he found
Empire for life? but Eustace painted her,
And said to me, she sitting with us then,
"When will *you* paint like this?" and I replied,
(My words were half in earnest, half in jest.)
"T is not your work, but Love's. Love unperceived.
A more ideal Artist he than all,
Came, drew your pencil from you, made those eyes
Darker than darkest pansies, and that hair
More black than ashbuds in the front of March."
And Juliet answered laughing, "Go and see
The Gardener's daughter: trust me, after that,
You scarce can fail to match his masterpiece."
And up we rose, and on the spur we went.

Not wholly in the busy world, nor quite
Beyond it, blooms the garden that I love.
News from the humming-city comes to it
In sound of funeral or of marriage bells;
And, sitting muffled in dark leaves, you hear
The windy clanging of the minster clock;
Although between it and the garden lies

A league of grass, washed by a slow broad stream,
That, stirred with languid pulses of the oar,
Waves all its lazy lilies, and creeps on,
Barge-laden, to three arches of a bridge
Crowned with the minster-towers.

The fields between
Are dewy-fresh, browsed by deep-uddered kine,
And all about the large lime feathers low,
The lime a summer home of murmurous wings.

In that still place she, hoarded in herself,
Grew, seldom seen : not less among us lived
Her fame from lip to lip. Who had not heard
Of Rose, the Gardener's daughter ? Where was he,
So blunt in memory, so old at heart,
At such a distance from his youth in grief,
That, having seen, forgot ? The common mouth,
So gross to express delight, in praise of her
Grew oratory. Such a lord is Love,
And Beauty such a mistress of the world.

And if I said that Fancy, led by Love,
Would play with flying forms and images,
Yet this is also true, that, long before
I looked upon her, when I heard her name
My heart was like a prophet to my heart,
And told me I should love. A crowd of hopes,

That sought to sow themselves like winged seeds,
Born out of everything I heard and saw,
Fluttered about my senses and my soul ;
And vague desires, like fitful blasts of balm
To one that travels quickly, made the air
Of Life delicious, and all kinds of thought,
That verged upon them, sweeter than the dream
Dreamed by a happy man, when the dark East,
Unseen, is brightening to his bridal morn.

And sure this orbit of the memory folds
Forever in itself the day we went
To see her. All the land in flowery squares,
Beneath a broad and equal-blowing wind,
Smelt of the coming summer, as one large cloud
Drew downward : but all else of Heaven was pure
Up to the Sun, and May from verge to verge,
And May with me from head to heel. And now,
As though 't were yesterday, as though it were
The hour just flown, that morn with all its sound,
(For those old Mays had thrice the life of these,)
Rings in mine ears. The steer forgot to graze,
And, where the hedge-row cuts the pathway, stood,
Leaning his horns into the neighbor field,
And lowing to his fellows. From the woods
Came voices of the well-contented doves.

The lark could scarce get out his notes for joy,
But shook his song together as he neared
His happy home, the ground. To left and right,
The cuckoo told his name to all the hills ;
The mellow ouzel fluted in the elm ;
The redcap whistled ; and the nightingale
Sang loud, as though he were the bird of day.

And Eustace turned, and smiling said to me,
" Hear how the bushes echo ! by my life,
These birds have joyful thoughts. Think you they sing
Like poets, from the vanity of song ?
Or have they any sense of why they sing ?
And would they praise the heavens for what they have ? "
And I made answer, " Were there nothing else
For which to praise the heavens but only love,
That only love were cause enough for praise."

Lightly he laughed, as one that read my thought,
And on we went ; but ere an hour had passed,
We reached a meadow slanting to the North ;
Down which a well-worn pathway courted us
To one green wicket in a private hedge ;
This, yielding, gave into a grassy walk
Through crowded lilac-ambush trimly pruned ;
And one warm gust, full-fed with perfume, blew
Beyond us, as we entered in the cool.

The garden stretches southward. In the midst
A cedar spread his dark-green layers of shade.
The garden-glasses shone, and momentarily
The twinkling laurel scattered silver lights.

“Eustace,” I said, “this wonder keeps the house.”
He nodded, but a moment afterwards
He cried, “Look! look!” Before he ceased I turned,
And, ere a star can wink, beheld her there.

For up the porch there grew an Eastern rose,
That, flowering high, the last night's gale had caught,
And blown across the walk. One arm aloft—
Gowned in pure white, that fitted to the shape—
Holding the bush, to fix it back, she stood.
A single stream of all her soft brown hair
Poured on one side: the shadow of the flowers
Stole all the golden gloss, and, wavering
Lovingly lower, trembled on her waist—
Ah, happy shade!—and still went wavering down,
But, ere it touched a foot that might have danced
The greensward into greener circles, dipt,
And mixed with shadows of the common ground!
But the full day dwelt on her brows, and sunned
Her violet eyes, and all her Hebe-bloom,
And doubled his own warmth against her lips,
And on the bounteous wave of such a breast

As never pencil drew. Half light, half shade,
She stood, a sight to make an old man young.

So rapt, we neared the house ; but she, a Rose
In roses, mingled with her fragrant toil,
Nor heard us come, nor from her tendance turned
Into the world without ; till close at hand,
And almost ere I knew mine own intent,
This murmur broke the stillness of that air
Which brooded round about her :

“ Ah, one rose,
One rose, but one, by those fair fingers culled,
Were worth a hundred kisses pressed on lips
Less exquisite than thine ! ”

She looked : but all
Suffused with blushes — neither self-possessed
Nor startled, but betwixt this mood and that,
Divided in a graceful quiet — paused,
And dropt the branch she held, and turning, wound
Her looser hair in braid, and stirred her lips
For some sweet answer, though no answer came ;
Nor yet refused the rose, but granted it,
And moved away, and left me, statue-like,
In act to render thanks.

I, that whole day,
Saw her no more, although I lingered there

Till every daisy slept, and Love's white star
Beamed through the thickened cedar in the dusk.

So home we went, and all the livelong way
With solemn gibe did Eustace banter me.
"Now," said he, "will you climb the top of Art.
You cannot fail but work in hues to dim
The Titianic Flora. Will you match
My Juliet? you, not you, — the Master, Love,
A more ideal Artist he than all."

So home I went, but could not sleep for joy,
Reading her perfect features in the gloom,
Kissing the rose she gave me o'er and o'er,
And shaping faithful record of the glance
That graced the giving — such a noise of life
Swarmed in the golden present, such a voice
Called to me from the years to come, and such
A length of bright horizon rimmed the dark.
And all that night I heard the watchmen peal
The sliding season: all that night I heard
The heavy clocks knolling the drowsy hours.
The drowsy hours, dispensers of all good,
O'er the mute city stole with folded wings,
Distilling odors on me as they went
To greet their fairer sisters of the East.

Love at first sight, first-born and heir to all,

Made this night thus. Henceforward squall nor storm
Could keep me from that Eden where she dwelt.
Light pretexts drew me : sometimes a Dutch love
For tulips ; then for roses, moss or musk,
To grace my city-rooms ; or fruits and cream
Served in the weeping elm ; and more and more
A word could bring the color to my cheek ;
A thought would fill my eyes with happy dew ;
Love trebled life within me, and with each
The year increased.

The daughters of the year,
One after one, through that still garden passed :
Each garlanded with her peculiar flower
Danced into light, and died into the shade ;
And each in passing touched with some new grace
Or seemed to touch her, so that day by day,
Like one that never can be wholly known,
Her beauty grew ; till Autumn brought an hour
For Eustace, when I heard his deep " I will,"
Breathed, like the covenant of a God, to hold
From thence through all the worlds : but I rose up
Full of his bliss, and following her dark eyes,
Felt earth as air beneath me, till I reached
The wicket-gate, and found her standing there.
There sat we down upon a garden mound,

Two mutually enfolded ; Love, the third,
Between us, in the circle of his arms
Enwound us both ; and over many a range
Of waning lime the gray cathedral towers,
Across a hazy glimmer of the west,
Revealed their shining windows : from them clashed
The bells ; we listened ; with the time we played ;
We spoke of other things ; we coursed about
The subject most at heart, more near and near,
Like doves about a dovecote, wheeling round
The central wish, until we settled there.

Then, in that time and place, I spoke to her,
Requiring, though I knew it was mine own,
Yet for the pleasure that I took to hear,
Requiring at her hand the greatest gift,
A woman's heart, the heart of her I loved ;
And in that time and place she answered me,
And in the compass of three little words,
More musical than ever came in one,
The silver fragments of a broken voice,
Made me most happy, lisping "I am thine !"

Shall I cease here ? Is this enough to say
That my desire, like all strongest hopes,
By its own energy fulfilled itself,
Merged in completion ? Would you learn at full

How passion rose through circumstantial grades
Beyond all grades developed ? and indeed
I had not staid so long to tell you all,
But while I mused came Memory with sad eyes,
Holding the folded annals of my youth ;
And while I mused, Love with knit brows went by,
And with a flying finger swept my lips,
And spake, " Be wise : not easily forgiven
Are those, who setting wide the doors, that bar
The secret bridal chambers of the heart,
Let in the day." Here, then, my words have end.

Yet might I tell of meetings, of farewells —
Of that which came between, more sweet than each,
In whispers, like the whispers of the leaves
That tremble round a nightingale — in sighs
Which perfect Joy, perplexed for utterance,
Stole from her sister Sorrow. Might I not tell
Of difference, reconcilment, pledges given,
And vows, where there was never need of vows,
And kisses, where the heart on one wild leap
Hung tranced from all pulsation, as above
The heavens between their fairy fleeces pale
Sowed all their mystic gulfs with fleeting stars,
Or while the balmy glooming, crescent-lit,
Spread the light haze along the river-shores,

And in the hollows ; or as once we met
Unheedful, though beneath a whispering rain
Night slid down one long stream of sighing wind,
And in her bosom bore the baby, Sleep.

But this whole hour your eyes have been intent
On that veiled picture — veiled, for what it holds
May not be dwelt on by the common day.
This prelude has prepared thee. Raise thy soul,
Make thine heart ready with thine eyes : the time
Is come to raise the veil.

Behold her there,
As I beheld her ere she knew my heart,
My first, last love ; the idol of my youth,
The darling of my manhood, and, alas !
Now the most blessed memory of mine age.

DORA.

WITH farmer Allan at the farm abode
William and Dora. William was his son,
And she his niece. He often looked at them,
And often thought "I'll make them man and wife."
Now Dora felt her uncle's will in all,
And yearned towards William; but the youth, because
He had been always with her in the house,
Thought not of Dora.

Then there came a day

When Allan called his son, and said, "My son:
I married late, but I would wish to see
My grandchild on my knees before I die:
And I have set my heart upon a match.
Now therefore look to Dora; she is well
To look to; thrifty too beyond her age.
She is my brother's daughter: he and I
Had once hard words, and parted, and he died
In foreign lands; but for his sake I bred

His daughter Dora : take her for your wife ;

20 For I have wished this marriage, night and day,
For many years." But William answered short ;

"I cannot marry Dora ; by my life,

I will not marry Dora." Then the old man

Was wroth, and doubled up his hands, and said :

"You will not, boy ! you dare to answer thus !

But in my time a father's word was law,

And so it shall be now for me. Look to 't :

Consider, William : take a month to think,

And let me have an answer to my wish ;

30 Or, by the Lord that made me, you shall pack,

And nevermore darken my doors again !"

But William answered madly ; bit his lips,

And broke away. The more he looked at her

The less he liked her ; and his ways were harsh ;

But Dora bore them meekly. Then before

The month was out he left his father's house,

And hired himself to work within the fields ;

And half in love, half spite, he wooed and wed

A laborer's daughter, Mary Morrison.

40 Then, when the bells were ringing, Allan called

His niece and said : "My girl, I love you well ;

But if you speak with him that was my son,

Or change a word with her he calls his wife,

My home is none of yours. My will is law."

home
parting

And Dora promised, being meek. She thought,
"It cannot be : my uncle's mind will change !"

And days went on, and there was born a boy
To William ; then distresses came on him ;
And day by day he passed his father's gate,
50 Heart-bröken, and his father helped him not.
But Dora stored what little she could save,
And sent it them by stealth, nor did they know
Who sent it ; till at last a fever seized
On William, and in harvest-time he died.

Then Dora went to Mary. Mary sat
And looked with tears upon her boy, and thought
Hard things of Dora. Dora came and said :
"I have obeyed my uncle until now,
And I have sinned, for it was all through me
60 This evil came on William at the first.
But, Mary, for the sake of him that's gone,
And for your sake, the woman that he chose,
And for this orphan, I am come to you :
You know there has not been for these five years
So full a harvest : let me take the boy,
And I will set him in my uncle's eye
Among the wheat ; that when his heart is glad
Of the full harvest, he may see the boy,
And bless him for the sake of him that's gone."
70 And Dora took the child, and went her way

Across the wheat, and sat upon a mound
 That was unsown, where many poppies grew.
 Far off the farmer came into the field
 And spied her not ; for none of all his men
 Dare tell him Dora waited with the child ;
 And Dora would have risen and gone to him,
 But her heart failed her ; and the reapers reaped,
 And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.

But when the morrow came, she rose and took
 80 The child once more, and sat upon the mound ;
 And made a little wreath of all the flowers
 That grew about, and tied it round his hat
 To make him pleasing in her uncle's eye.
 Then when the farmer passed into the field
 He spied her, and he left his men at work,
 And came and said, " Where were you yesterday ?
 Whose child is that ? What are you doing here ?"
 So Dora cast her eyes upon the ground,
 And answered softly, " This is William's child !"
 90 " And did I not," said Allan, " did I not
 Forbid you, Dora ?" Dora said again :
 " Do with me as you will, but take the child
 And bless him for the sake of him that's gone !"
 And Allan said, " I see it is a trick
 Got up betwixt you and the woman there.
 I must be taught my duty, and by you !

Home - Party
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DORA.

You knew my word was law, and yet you dared
To slight it. Well— for I will take the boy ;
But go you hence, and never see me more.”

100 So saying, he took the boy, that cried aloud
And struggled hard. The wreath of flowers fell
At Dora's feet. She bowed upon her hands,
And the boy's cry came to her from the field,
More and more distant. She bowed down her head,
Remembering the day when first she came,
And all the things that had been. She bowed down
And wept in secret ; and the reapers reaped,
And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.

Then Dora went to Mary's house, and stood
110 Upon the threshold. Mary saw the boy
Was not with Dora. She broke out in praise
To God, that helped her in her widowhood
And Dora said, “ My uncle took the boy ;
But, Mary, let me live and work with you :
He says that he will never see me more.”
Then answered Mary, “ This shall never be,
That thou shouldst take my trouble on thyself :
And, now I think, he shall not have the boy,
For he will teach him hardness, and to slight
120 His mother ; therefore thou and I will go,
And I will have my boy, and bring him home ;
And I will beg of him to take thee back ;

But if he will not take thee back again,
 Then thou and I will live within one house,
 And work for William's child, until he grows
 Of age to help us."

So the women kissed

Each other, and set out and reached the farm.

The door was off the latch : they peeped and saw

130 The boy set up betwixt his grandsire's knees,
 Who thrust him in the hollows of his arm,
 And clapt him on the hands and on the cheeks,
 Like one that loved him ; and the lad stretched out
 And babbled for the golden seal, that hung
 From Allan's watch, and sparkled by the fire.
 Then they came in ; but when the boy beheld
 His mother, he cried out to come to her :

And Allan sat him down, and Mary said :

" O-Father ! — if you let me call you so —

140 I never came a-begging for myself,
 Or William, or this child ; but now I come
 For Dora : take her back ; she loves you well.
 O Sir, when William died, he died at peace
 With all men ; for I asked him, and he said,
 He could not ever rue his marrying me.—
 I had been a patient wife : but, Sir, he said
 That he was wrong to cross his father thus :

‘God bless him!’ he said, ‘and may he never know
 The troubles I have gone through!’ Then he turned
 150 His face and passed — unhappy that I am!
 But now, Sir, let me have my boy, for you
 Will make him hard, and he will learn to slight
 His father’s memory; and take Dora back,
 And let all this be as it was before.”

So Mary said, and Dora hid her face
 By Mary. There was silence in the room;
 And all at once the old man burst in sobs:—

“I have been to blame — to blame! I have killed
 my son!

160 I have killed him — but I loved him — my dear son!
 May God forgive me! — I have been to blame.
 Kiss me, my children!”

Then they clung about
 The old man’s neck, and kissed him many times.
 And all the man was broken with remorse;
 And all his love came back a hundredfold;
 And for three hours he sobbed o’er William’s child,
 Thinking of William.

So those four abode
 170 Within one house together; and as years
 Went forward, Mary took another mate;
 172 But Dora lived unmarried till her death.

AUDLEY COURT.

"THE Bull, the Fleece are crammed, and not a room
For love or money. Let us picnic there
At Audley Court."

I spoke, while Audley feast
Hummed like a hive all round the narrow quay,
To Francis, with a basket on his arm,
To Francis just alighted from the boat,
And breathing of the sea. "With all my heart,"
Said Francis. Then we shouldered through the swarn,
And rounded by the stillness of the beach
To where the bay runs up its latest horn.

We left the dying ebb that faintly lipped
The flat red granite ; so by many a sweep
Of meadow smooth from aftermath we reached
The griffin-guarded gates, and passed through all
The pillared dusk of sounding sycamores,
And crossed the garden to the gardener's lodge,

With all its casements bedded, and its walls
And chimneys muffled in the leafy vine.

There, on a slope of orchard, Francis laid
A damask napkin wrought with horse and hound,
Brought out a dusky loaf that smelt of home,
And, half-cut-down, a pasty costly-made,
Where quail and pigeon, lark and leveret lay,
Like fossils of the rock, with golden yolks
Imbedded and injellied ; last, with these,
A flask of cider from his father's vats,
Prime, which I knew ; and so we sat and eat
And talked old matters over : who was dead,
Who married, who was like to be, and how
The races went, and who would rent the hall :
Then touched upon the game, how scarce it was
This season : glancing thence, discussed the farm,
The fourfield system and the price of grain ;
And struck upon the corn-laws, where we split,
And came again together on the king
With heated faces ; till he laughed aloud ;
And, while the blackbird on the pippin hung
To hear him, clapt his hand in mine and sang—
“ O ! who would fight and march and countermarch,
Be shot for sixpence in a battle-field,
And shovelled up into a bloody trench
Where no one knows ? but let me live my life.

“ O ! who would cast and balance at a desk,
Perched like a crow upon a three-legged stool,
Till all his juice is dried, and all his joints
Are full of chalk ? but let me live my life.

“ Who ’d serve the state ? for if I carved my name
Upon the cliffs that guard my native land,
I might as well have traced it in the sands ;
The sea wastes all : but let me live my life.

“ O ! who would love ? I wooed a woman once,
But she was sharper than an eastern wind,
And all my heart turned from her, as a thorn
Turns from the sea : but let me live my life.”

He sang his song, and I replied with mine :
I found it in a volume, all of songs,
Knocked down to me, when old Sir Robert’s pride,
His books — the more the pity, so I said —
Came to the hammer here in March — and this —
I set the words, and added names I knew.

“ Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, sleep, and dream of me :
Sleep, Ellen, folded in thy sister’s arm,
And sleeping, haply dream her arm is mine.

“ Sleep, Ellen, folded in Emilia’s arm ;
Emilia, fairer than all else but thou,
For thou art fairer than all else that is.

“ Sleep, breathing health and peace upon her breast

Sleep, breathing love and trust against her lip :
I go to-night : I come to-morrow morn.

“ I go, but I return : I would I were
The pilot of the darkness and the dream.
Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, love; and dream of me.

So sang we each to either, Francis Hale,
The farmer's son who lived across the bay,
My friend ; and I, that having wherewithal,
And in the fallow leisure of my life,
Did what I would ; but ere the night we rose
And sauntered home beneath a moon, that, just
In crescent, dimly rained about the leaf
Twilights of airy silver, till we reached
The limit of the hills ; and as we sank
From rock to rock upon the glooming quay,
The town was hushed beneath us : lower down
The bay was oily-calm ; the harbor-buoy
With one green sparkle ever and anon
Dipt by itself, and we were glad at heart.

WALKING TO THE MAIL.

John. I'm glad I walked. How fresh the meadows look
Above the river, and, but a month ago,
The whole hill-side was redder than a fox.
Is yon plantation where this byway joins
The turnpike?

James. Yes.

John. And when does this come by?

James. The mail? At one o'clock.

John. What is it now?

James. A quarter to.

John. Whose house is that I see
Beyond the watermills?

James. Sir Edward Head's:
But he's abroad: the place is to be sold.

John. O, his. He was not broken.

James. No sir, he,
Vexed with a morbid devil in his blood
That veiled the world with jaundice, hid his face
From all men, and commercing with himself,

He lost the sense that handles daily life —
 That keeps us all in order more or less —
 And sick of home, went overseas for change.

John. And whither ?

James. Nay, who knows ? he 's here and there
 But let him go ; his devil goes with him,
 As well as with his tenant, Jocky Dawes,

John. What 's that ?

James. You saw the man but yesterday :
 He picked the pebble from your horse's foot.
 His house was haunted by a jolly ghost,
 That rummaged like a rat. No servant staid :
 The farmer vext packs up his beds and chairs,
 And all his household stuff ; and with his boy
 Betwixt his knees, his wife upon the tilt,
 Sets forth, and meets a friend who hails him, " What !
 You 're flitting ! " " Yes, we 're flitting," says the ghost,
 (For they had packed the thing among the beds.)
 " O well," says he, " you flitting with us too —
 Jack, turn the horses' heads and home again."

John. He left *his* wife behind ; for so I heard.

James. He left her, yes. I met my lady once :
 A woman like a butt, and harsh as crabs.

John. O yet but I remember, ten years back —
 'T is now at least ten years — and then she was —
 You could not light upon a sweeter thing :

A body slight and round, and like a pear
In growing, modest eyes, a hand, a foot
Lessening in perfect cadence, and a skin
As clean and white as privet when it flowers.

James. Ay, ay, the blossom fades, and they that loved
At first like dove and dove were cat and dog.
She was the daughter of a cottager,
Out of her sphere. What betwixt shame and pride,
New things and old, himself and her, she soured
To what she is : a nature never kind !
Like men, like manners : like breeds like, they say.
Kind nature is the best : those manners next
That fit us like a nature second-hand ;
Which are indeed the manners of the great.

John. But I had heard it was this bill that past,
And fear of change at home, that drove him hence.

James. That was the last drop in the cup of gall.
I once was near him when his bailiff brought
A Chartist pike. You should have seen him wince
As from a venomous thing : he thought himself
A mark for all, and shuddered, lest a cry
Should break his sleep by night, and his nice eyes
Should see the raw mechanic's bloody thumbs
Sweat on his blazoned chairs ; but, sir, you know
That these two parties still divide the world —
Of those that want, and those that have : and still

The same old sore breaks out from age to age
With much the same result. Now I myself,
A Tory to the quick, was as a boy
Destructive, when I had not what I would.
I was at school — a college in the South :
There lived a flayflint near ; we stole his fruit,
His hens, his eggs ; but there was law for us ;
We paid in person. He had a sow, sir. She,
With meditative grunts of much content,
Lay great with pig, wallowing in sun and mud.
By night we dragged her to the college tower
From her warm bed, and up the corkscrew stair
With hand and rope we haled the groaning sow,
And on the leads we kept her till she pigged.
Large range of prospect had the mother sow,
And but for daily loss of one she loved,
As one by one we took them — but for this —
As never sow was higher in this world —
Might have been happy : but what lot is pure ?
We took them all, till she was left alone
Upon her tower, the Niobe of swine,
And so returned unfarrowed to her sty.

John. They found you out ?

James. Not they.

John. Well — after all —

What know we of the secret of a man ?

His nerves were wrong. What ails us who are sound,
That we should mimic this raw fool the world,
Which charts us all in its coarse blacks or whites,
As ruthless as a baby with a worm,
As cruel as a schoolboy ere he grows
To Pity — more from ignorance than will.

But put your best foot forward, or I fear
That we shall miss the mail: and here it comes
With five at top: as quaint a four-in-hand
As you shall see — three pyebalds and a roan.

ST. SIMEON STYLITES.

ALTHOUGH I be the basest of mankind,
From scalp to sole one slough and crust of sin,
Unfit for earth, unfit for heaven, scarce meet
For troops of devils, mad with blasphemy,
I will not cease to grasp the hope I hold
Of saintdom, and to clamor, mourn and sob,
Battering the gates of heaven with storms of prayer,
Have mercy, Lord, and take away my sin.

Let this avail, just, dreadful, mighty God,
This not be all in vain, that thrice ten years,
Thrice multiplied by superhuman pangs,
In hungers and in thirsts, fevers and cold,
In coughs, aches, stitches, ulcerous throes and cramps,
A sign betwixt the meadow and the cloud,
Patient on this tall pillar I have borne
Rain, wind, frost, heat, hail, damp, and sleet, and snow ;
And I had hoped that ere this period closed
Thou wouldst have caught me up into thy rest,
Denying not these weather-beaten limbs
The meed of saints, the white robe and the palm.

O take the meaning, Lord : I do not breathe,

Not whisper, any murmur of complaint.
Pain heaped ten-hundred-fold to this, were still
Less burthen, by ten-hundred-fold, to bear,
Than were those lead-like tons of sin, that crushed
My spirit flat before thee.

O Lord, Lord,
Thou knowest I bore this better at the first,
For I was strong and hale of body then ;
And though my teeth, which now are dropt away,
Would chatter with the cold, and all my beard
Was tagged with icy fringes in the moon,
I drowned the whoopings of the owl with sound
Of pious hymns and psalms, and sometimes saw
An angel stand and watch me, as I sang.
Now am I feeble grown : my end draws nigh —
I hope my end draws nigh : half deaf I am,
So that I scarce can hear the people hum
About the column's base, and almost blind,
And scarce can recognize the fields I know.
And both my thighs are rotted with the dew,
Yet cease I not to clamor and to cry,
While my stiff spine can hold my weary head,
Till all my limbs drop piecemeal from the stone,
Have mercy, mercy : take away my sin .

O Jesus, if thou wilt not save my soul,
Who may be saved ? who is it may be saved ?

Who may be made a saint, if I fail here ?
Show me the man hath suffered more than I.
For did not all thy martyrs die one death ?
For either they were stoned, or crucified,
Or burned in fire, or boiled in oil, or sawn
In twain beneath the ribs ; but I die here
To-day, and whole years long, a life of death.
Bear witness, if I could have found a way
(And heedfully I sifted all my thought)
More slowly-painful to subdue this home
Of sin, my flesh, which I despise and hate,
I had not stinted practice, oh my God !

For not alone this pillar-punishment,
Not this alone I bore : but while I lived
In the white convent down the valley there,
For many weeks about my loins I wore
The rope that haled the buckets from the well,
Twisted as tight as I could knot the noose ;
And spake not of it to a single soul,
Until the ulcer, eating through my skin,
Betrayed my secret penance, so that all
My brethren marvelled greatly. More than this
I bore, whereof, oh God, thou knowest all.

Three winters, that my soul might grow to thee,
I lived up there on yonder mountain side.
My right leg chained into the crag, I lay

Pent in a roofless close of ragged stones ;
Inswathed sometimes in wandering mist, and twice
Blacked with thy branding thunder, and sometimes
Sucking the damps for drink, and eating not,
Except the spare chance-gift of those that came
To touch my body and be healed, and live :
And they say then that I worked miracles,
Whereof my fame is loud amongst mankind,
Cured lameness, palsies, cancers. Thou, oh God,
Knowest alone whether this was or no.
Have mercy, mercy ; cover all my sin !

Then, that I might be more alone with thee,
Three years I lived upon a pillar high
Six cubits, and three years on one of twelve ;
And twice three years I crouched on one that rose
Twenty by measure ; last of all, I grew
Twice ten long weary, weary years to this,
That numbers forty cubits from the soil.

I think that I have borne as much as this —
Or else I dream — and for so long a time,
If I may measure time by yon slow light,
And this high dial, which my sorrow crowns —
So much — even so.

And yet I know not well,
For that the evil ones come here, and say,
“ Fall down, oh Simeon : thou hast suffered long

For ages and for ages !” Then they prate
 Of penances I cannot have gone through,
 Perplexing me with lies ; and oft I fall,
 Maybe for months, in such blind lethargies,
 That Heaven, and Earth, and Time are choked.

But yet

Bethink thee, Lord, while thou and all the saints
 Enjoy themselves in heaven, and men on earth
 House in the shade of comfortable roofs,
 Sit with their wives by fires, eat wholesome food,
 And wear warm clothes, and even beasts have stalls,
 I, 'tween the spring and downfall of the light,
 Bow down one thousand and two hundred times,
 To Christ, the Virgin Mother, and the Saints ;
 Or in the night, after a little sleep,
 I wake : the chill stars sparkle ; I am wet
 With drenching dews, or stiff with crackling frost.
 I wear an undressed goatskin on my back ;
 A grazing iron collar grinds my neck ;
 And in my weak, lean arms I lift the cross,
 And strive and wrestle with thee till I die :
 O mercy, mercy ! wash away my sin !
 O Lord, thou knowest what a man I am ;
 A sinful man, conceived and born in sin :
 'T is their own doing ; this is none of mine ;
 Lay it not to me. Am I to blame for this.

That here come those that worship me ? Ha ! ha !
 They think that I am somewhat. What am I ?
 The silly people take me for a saint,
 And bring me offerings of fruit and flowers ;
 And I, in truth (thou wilt bear witness here)
 Have all in all endured as much, and more
 Than many just and holy men, whose names
 Are registered and calendared for saints.

Good people, you do ill to kneel to me.
 What is it I can have done to merit this ?
 I am a sinner viler than you all.
 It may be I have wrought some miracles,
 And cured some halt and maimed ; but what of that ?
 It may be, no one, even among the saints,
 May match his pains with mine ; but what of that ?
 Yet do not rise : for you may look on me,
 And in your looking you may kneel to God.
 Speak ! is there any of you halt or maimed ?
 I think you know I have some power with Heaven
 From my long penance : let him speak his wish.

Yes, I can heal him. Power goes forth from me.
 They say that they are healed. Ah, hark ! they shout
 " St. Simeon Stylites." Why, if so,
 God reaps a harvest in me. O my soul,
 God reaps a harvest in thee. If this be,
 Can I work miracles and not be saved ?

This is not told of any. They were saints.
It cannot be but that I shall be saved ;
Yea, crowned a saint. They shout, " Behold a saint ! "
And lower voices saint me from above.
Courage, St. Simeon ! This dull chrysalis
Cracks into shining wings, and hope ere death
Spreads more and more and more, that God hath now
Sponged and made blank of crimeful record all
My mortal archives.

O my sons, my sons,
I, Simeon of the pillar, by surname
Stylites, among men ; I, Simeon,
The watcher on the column till the end ;
I, Simeon, whose brain the sunshine bakes ;
I, whose bald brows in silent hours become
Unnaturally hoar with rime, do now
From my high nest of penance here proclaim
That Pontius and Iscariot by my side
Showed like fair seraphs. On the coals I lay,
A vessel full of sin : all hell beneath
Made me boil over. Devils plucked my sleeve ;
Abaddon and Asmodeus caught at me.
I smote them with the cross ; they swarmed again.
In bed like monstrous apes they crushed my chest.
They flapped my light out as I read : I saw
Their faces grow between me and my book :

With colt-like whinny and with hoggish whine
They burst my prayer. Yet this way was left,
And by this way I 'scaped them. Mortify
Your flesh, like me, with scourges and with thorns ;
Smite, shrink not, spare not. If it may be, fast
Whole Lents, and pray. I hardly, with slow steps —
With slow, faint steps, and much exceeding pain —
Have scrambled past those pits of fire, that still
Sing in mine ears. But yield not me the praise :
God only through his bounty hath thought fit,
Among the powers and princes of this world,
To make me an example to mankind,
Which few can reach to. Yet I do not say
But that a time may come — yea, even now,
Now, now, his footsteps smite the threshold stairs
Of life — I say, that time is at the doors
When you may worship me without reproach ;
For I will leave my relics in your land,
And you may carve a shrine about my dust,
And burn a fragrant lamp before my bones,
When I am gathered to the glorious saints.

While I spake then, a sting of shrewdest pain
Ran shrivelling through me, and a cloudlike change,
In passing, with a grosser film made thick
These heavy, horny eyes. The end ! the end !
Surely the end ! What 's here ? a shape, a shade,

A flash of light. Is that the angel there
That holds a crown? Come, blessed brother, come.
I know thy glittering face. I waited long;
My brows are ready. What! deny it now?
Nay, draw, draw, draw nigh. So I clutch it. Christ!
'T is gone: 't is here again; the crown! the crown!
So now 't is fitted on and grows to me,
And from it melt the dews of Paradise,
Sweet! sweet! spikenard, and balm, and frankincense.
Ah! let me not be fooled, sweet saints: I trust
That I am whole, and clean, and meet for Heaven.

Speak, if there be a priest, a man of God,
Among you there, and let him presently
Approach, and lean a ladder on the shaft,
And climbing up into my airy home,
Deliver me the blessed sacrament;
For by the warning of the Holy Ghost,
I prophesy that I shall die to-night,
A quarter before twelve.

But thou, oh Lord,
Aid all this foolish people; let them take
Example, pattern: lead them to thy light.

THE SEA-FAIRIES.



Slow sailed the weary mariners, and saw,
Betwixt the green brink and the running foam,
Sweet faces, rounded arms, and bosoms prest
To nittle harps of gold ; and, while they mused,
Whispering to each other half in fear,
Shrill music reached them on the middle sea.

Whither away, whither away, whither away? fly no
more.

Whither away from the high green field, and the happy
blossoming shore ?

Day and night to the billow the fountain calls ;
Down shower the gambolling waterfalls
From wandering over the lea :
Out of the live-green heart of the dells
They freshen the silvery-crimson shells,
And thick with white bells the clover-hill swells
High over the full-toned sea :
O hither, come hither, and furl your sails,
Come hither to me and to me !

Hither, come hither, and frolic and play ;
Here it is only the mew that wails ;
We will sing to you all the day :
Mariner, mariner, furl your sails,
For here are the blissful downs and dales,
And merrily, merrily carol the gales,
And the spangle dances in bight and bay,
And the rainbow forms and flies on the land
Over the islands free ;
And the rainbow lives in the curve of the sand.
Hither, come hither and see ;
And the rainbow hangs on the poisoning wave,
And sweet is the color of cove and cave,
And sweet shall your welcome be ;
O hither, come hither, and be our lords,
For merry brides are we !
We will kiss sweet kisses, and speak sweet words :
O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten
With pleasure and love and jubilee !
O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten
When the sharp, clear twang of the golden chords
Runs up the ridgéd sea !
Who can light on as happy a shore
All the world o'er, all the world o'er ?
Whither away ? listen and stay : mariner, mariner, fly
no more.

THE DESERTED HOUSE.



1.

LIFE and Thought have gone away
Side by side,
Leaving door and windows wide :
Careless tenants they .

2.

All within is dark as night :
In the windows is no light ;
And no murmur at the door,
So frequent on its hinge before.

3.

Close the door, the shutters close,
Or through the windows we shall see
The nakedness and vacancy
Of the dark, deserted house.

4.

Come away ; no more of mirth
Is here or merry-making sound.
The house was builded of the earth,
And shall fall again to ground.

5.

Come away ; for Life and Thought
Here no longer dwell ;
But in a city glorious —
A great and distant city — have bought
A mansion incorruptible.
Would they could have stayed with us !

EDWIN MORRIS;

OR, THE LAKE.

O ME, my pleasant rambles by the lake,
My sweet, wild, fresh three quarters of a year,
My one Oasis in the dust and drouth
Of city life ! I was a sketcher then ;
See here, my doing : curves of mountain, bridge,
Boat, island, ruins of a castle, built
When men knew how to build, upon a rock,
With turrets lichen-gilded like a rock ;
And here, new-comers in an ancient hold,
New-comers from the Mersey, millionaires,
Here lived the Hills, — a Tudor-chimneyed bulk
Of mellow brickwork on an isle of bowers.

O me ! my pleasant rambles by the lake
With Edwin Morris and with Edward Bull,
The curate ; he was fatter than his cure.

But Edwin Morris, he that knew the names,
Long learned names of agaric, moss and fern,

Who forged a thousand theories of the rocks,
Who taught me how to skate, to row, to swim,
Who read me rhymes elaborately good,
His own, — I called him Crichton, for he seemed
All-perfect, finished to the finger nail.

And once I asked him of his early life,
And his first passion ; and he answered me ;
And well his words became him : was he not
A full-celled honeycomb of eloquence
Stored from all flowers ? Poet-like he spoke :

“ My love for Nature is as old as I ;
But thirty moons, one honeymoon to that,
And three rich sennights more, my love for her.
My love for Nature and my love for her,
Of different ages, like twin-sisters grew,
Twin-sisters differently beautiful.
To some full music rose and sank the sun,
And some full music seemed to move and change
With all the varied changes of the dark,
And either twilight and the day between ;
For daily hope fulfilled, to rise again
Revolving toward fulfilment, made it sweet
To walk, to sit, to sleep, to wake, to breathe.”

Or this or something like to this he spoke.
Then said the fat-faced curate, Edward Bull,

"I take it, God made the woman for the man,
 And for the good and increase of the world.
 A pretty face is well, and this is well,
 To have a dame indoors that trims us up,
 And keeps us tight; but these unreal ways
 Seem but the theme of writers, and, indeed,
 Worn threadbare. Man is made of solid stuff.
 I say, God made the woman for the man,
 And for the good and increase of the world."

"Parson," said I, "you pitch the pipe too low;
 But I have sudden touches, and can run"
 My faith beyond my practice into his;
 Though if, in dancing after Letty Hill,
 I do not hear the bells upon my cap,
 I scarce hear other music; yet say on.
 What should one give to light on such a dream?"
 I asked him half-sardonically.

"Give?"

"Give all thou art," he answered, and a light
 Of laughter dimpled in his swarthy cheek;
 "I would have hid her needle in my heart,
 To save her little finger from a scratch
 No deeper than the skin; my ears could hear
 Her lightest breaths; her least remark was worth
 The experience of the wise. I went and came;"

Her voice fled always through the summer land,
 I spoke her name alone. Thrice-happy days !
 The flower of each, those moments when we met,
 The crown of all, we met to part no more."

Were not his words delicious, I a beast
 To take them as I did ? but something jarred ;
 Whether he spoke too largely ; that there seemed
 A touch of something false, some self-conceit,
 Or over-smoothness ; howsoe'er it was,
 He scarcely hit my humor, and I said :

" Friend Edwin, do not think yourself alone
 Of all men happy. Shall not Love to me,
 As in the Latin song I learnt at school,
 Sneeze out a full God-bless-you right and left ?
 But you can talk ; yours is a kindly vein ;
 I have, I think, — Heaven knows, — as much within
 Have, or should have, but for a thought or two,
 That, like a purple beech among the greens,
 Looks out of place ; 't is from no want in her :
 It is my shyness, or my self-distrust,
 Or something of a wayward modern mind
 Dissecting passion. Time will set me right."

So spoke I, knowing not the things that were.
 Then said the fat-faced curate, Edward Bull :

" God made the woman for the use of man,
 And for the good and increase of the world."
 And I and Edwin laughed ; and now we paused
 About the windings of the marge to hear
 The soft wind blowing over meadowy holms
 And alders, garden-isles ; and now we left
 The clerk behind us, I and he, and ran
 By ripply shallows of the lipping lake,
 Delighted with the freshness and the sound.

But, when the bracken rusted on their crags,
 My suit had withered, nipt to death by him
 That was a God, and is a lawyer's clerk,
 The rentroll Cupid of our rainy isles.
 'T is true we met ; one hour I had, no more ,
 She sent a note, the seal an *Elle vous suit*,
 The close " Your Letty, only yours ; " and this
 Thrice underscored. The friendly mist of morn
 Clung to the lake. I boated over, ran
 My craft aground, and heard with beating heart
 The Sweet-Gale rustle round the shelving keel ;
 And out I stept, and up I crept ; she moved,
 Like Proserpine in Enna, gathering flowers ;
 Then low and sweet I whistled thrice ; and she,
 She turned, we closed, we kissed, swore faith, I breathed
 In some new planet ; a silent cousin stole

Upon us and departed. "Leave," she cried,
"O leave me!" "Never, dearest, never; here
I brave the worst;" and while we stood like fools
Embracing, all at once a score of pugs
And poodles yelled within, and out they came,
Trustees and aunts and uncles. "What, with him!
"Go" (shrilled the cotton-spinning chorus), "him!"
I choked. Again they shrieked the burthen "Him!"
Again with hands of wild rejection, "Go!—
Girl, get you in!" She went, — and in one month
They wedded her to sixty thousand pounds,
To lands in Kent and messuages in York,
And slight Sir Robert with his watery smile
And educated whisker. But for me,
They set an ancient creditor to work :
It seems I broke a close with force and arms ;
There came a mystic token from the king
To greet the sheriff, needless courtesy !
I read, and fled by night, and flying turned ;
Her taper glimmered in the lake below ;
I turned once more, close-buttoned to the storm ;
So left the place, left Edwin, nor have seen
Him since, nor heard of her, nor cared to hear.

Nor cared to hear ? perhaps ; yet long ago
I have pardoned little Letty ; not indeed,

It may be, for her own dear sake, but this,
She seems a part of those fresh days to me ;
For, in the dust and drouth of London life,
She moves among my visions of the lake,
While the prime swallow dips his wing, or then
While the gold-lily blows, and overhead
The light cloud smoulders on the summer crag.

TO ———,

AFTER READING A LIFE AND LETTERS.



“Cursed be he that moves my bones.”

Shakspere's Epitaph.



You might have won the Poet's name,
If such be worth the winning now,
And gained a laurel for your brow
Of sounder leaf than I can claim ;

But you have made the wiser choice,
A life that moves to gracious ends
Through troops of unrecording friends,
A deedful life, a silent voice ;

And you have missed the irreverent doom
Of those that wear the Poet's crown ;
Hereafter neither knave nor clown
Shall hold their orgies at your tomb.

For now the Poet cannot die,
Nor leave his music as of old,
But round him, ere he scarce be cold,
Begins the scandal and the cry :

“ Proclaim the faults he would not show ;
Break lock and seal ; betray the trust ;
Keep nothing sacred ; 't is but just
The many-headed beast should know.”

Ah, shameless ! for he did but sing
A song that pleased us from its worth ;
No public life was his on earth,
No blazoned statesman he, nor king.

He gave the people of his best ;
His worst he kept, his best he gave.
My Shakspeare's curse on clown and knave
Who will not let his ashes rest !

Who make it seem more sweet to be
The little life of bank and brier,
The bird that pipes his lone desire
And dies unheard within his tree,

Than he that warbles long and loud
And drops at Glory's temple-gates,
For whom the carrion vulture waits
To tear his heart before the crowd !

TO E. L., ON HIS TRAVELS IN GREECE

ILLYRIAN woodlands, echoing falls
Of water, sheets of summer glass,
The long divine Peneïan pass,
The vast Akrokeraunian walls,

Tomohrit, Athos, all things fair,
With such a pencil, such a pen,
You shadow forth to distant men,
I read and felt that I was there :

And trust me while I turned the page,
And tracked you still on classic ground,
I grew in gladness till I found
My spirits in the golden age.

For me the torrent ever poured
And glistened, — here and there alone
The broad-limbed Gods at randon thrown
By fountain-urns ; — and Naiads oared

A glimmering shoulder under gloom
Of cavern pillars ; on the swell
The silver lily heaved and fell ;
And many a slope was rich in bloom,

From him that on the mountain lea
By dancing rivulets fed his flocks,
To him who sat upon the rocks,
And fluted to the morning sea.

COME not, when I am dead,
 To drop thy foolish tears upon my grave,
 To trample round my fallen head,
 And vex the unhappy dust thou would'st not save.
 There let the wind sweep and the plover cry ;
 But thou, go by.

Child, if it were thine error or thy crime,
 I care no longer, being all unblest ;
 Wed whom thou wilt, but I am sick of Time,
 And I desire to rest.
 Pass on, weak heart, and leave me where I lie :
 Go by, go by.

THE EAGLE.

A FRAGMENT.

HE clasps the crag with hookéd hands ;
 Close to the sun in lonely lands,
 Ringed with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls ;
 He watches from his mountain walls,
 And like a thunderbolt he falls.

IN MEMORIAM.

STRONG Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove !

Thine are these orbs of light and shade ;
Thou madest Life in man and brute ;
Thou madest Death ; and lo ! thy foot
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust :
Thou madest man, he knows not why ;
He thinks he was not made to die ;
And thou hast made him : thou art just.

Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest manhood, thou :
Our wills are ours, we know not how ;
Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

Our little systems have their day ;
They have their day and cease to be ;
They are but broken lights of thee,
And thou, oh Lord, art more than they.

We have but faith : we cannot know ;
For knowledge is of things we see ;
And yet we trust it comes from thee,
A beam in darkness : let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell ;
That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music, as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight ;
We mock thee when we do not fear :
But help thy foolish ones to bear ;
Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light.

Forgive what seemed my sin in me ;
 What seemed my worth since I began ;
 For merit lives from man to man,
And not from man, oh Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,
 Thy creature, whom I found so fair.
 I trust he lives in thee, and there
I find him worthier to be loved.

Forgive these wild and wandering cries,
 Confusions of a wasted youth ;
 Forgive them where they fail in truth,
And in thy wisdom make me wise.

IN MEMORIAM

A. H. H.

OBITU MDCCLXXXIII.

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L

I HELD it truth, with him who sings
 To one clear harp in divers tones,
 That men may rise on stepping-stones
Of their dead selves to higher things.

But who shall so forecast the years,
 And find in loss a gain to match?
 Or reach a hand through time to catch
The far-off interest of tears?

Let Love clasp Grief, lest both be drowned,
 Let darkness keep her raven gloss;
 Ah! sweeter to be drunk with loss,
To dance with death, to beat the ground,

Than that the victor Hours should scorn
 The long result of love, and boast:
 "Behold the man that loved and lost,
But all he was is overworn."

II.

OLD Yew, which graspest at the stones
That name the under-lying dead,
Thy fibres net the dreamless head;
Thy roots are wrapped about the bones.

The seasons bring the flower again,
And bring the firstling to the flock;
And in the dusk of thee, the clock
Beats out the little lives of men.

O, not for thee the glow, the bloom,
Who changest not in any gale!
Nor branding summer suns avail
To touch thy thousand years of gloom.

And gazing on ^{Me} the sullen tree,
Sick for thy stubborn hardihood,
I seem to fail from out my blood
And grow incorporate into thee.

III.

O SORROW, cruel fellowship!

O Priestess in the vaults of Death!

O sweet and bitter in a breath,

What whispers from thy lying lip?

“The stars,” she whispers, “blindly run;

A web is woven across the sky;

From out waste places comes a cry,

And murmurs from the dying sun:

“And all the phantom, Nature, stands,—

With all her music in her tone,

A hollow echo of my own,—

A hollow form with empty hands.”

And shall I take a thing so blind,

Embrace her as my natural good;

Or crush her, like a vice of blood,

Upon the threshold of the mind?

IV.

To Sleep I give my powers away ;
My will is bondsman to the dark ;
I sit within a helmless bark,
And with my heart I muse, and say :

“ O heart, how fares it with thee now,
That thou shouldst fail from thy desire,
Who scarcely darest to inquire
What is it makes me beat so low ? ”

Something it is which thou hast lost,
Some pleasure from thine early years.
Break, thou deep vase of chilling tears,
That grief hath shaken into frost !

Such clouds of nameless trouble cross
All night below the darkened eyes ;
With morning wakes the will, and cries,
“ Thou shall not be the fool of loss ! ”

V.

I SOMETIMES hold it half a sin
 To put in words the grief I feel ;
 For words, like nature, half reveal
And half conceal the Soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,
 A use in measured language lies ;
 The sad mechanic exercise,
Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

In words, like weeds, I'll wrap me o'er,
 Like coarsest clothes against the cold ;
 But that large grief which these infold
Is given in outline and no more.

VI.

ONE writes, that "Other friends remain,"
That "Loss is common to the race,"—
And common is the commonplace,
And vacant chaff well meant for grain.

That loss is common would not make
My own less bitter, rather more :
Too common ! ' Never morning wore
To evening, but some heart did break.)

O father, wheresoe'er thou be,
That pledgest now thy gallant son ;
A shot, ere half thy draught be done,
Hath stilled the life that beat from thee.

O mother, praying God will save
Thy sailor, while thy head is bowed,
His heavy-shotted hammock-shroud
Drops in his vast and wandering grave.

Ye know no more than I who wrought
At that last hour to please him well ;
Who mused on all I had to tell,
And something written, something thought ;

Expecting still his advent home ;
And ever met him on his way
With wishes, thinking, here to-day,
Or here to-morrow will he come.

O, somewhere, meek unconscious dove,
That sittest 'ranging golden hair ;
And glad to find thyself so fair,
Poor child, that waitest for thy love !

For now her father's chimney glows
In expectation of a guest ;
And thinking " this will please him best,"
She takes a ribbon or a rose ;

For he will see them on to-night ;
And with the thought her color burns ;
And, having left the glass, she turns
Once more to set a ringlet right ;

And, even when she turned, the curse
 Had fallen, and her future lord
 Was drowned in passing through the ford,
Or killed in falling from his horse.

O, what to her shall be the end?
 And what to me remains of good?
 To her, perpetual maidenhood,
And unto me, no second friend.

VII.

DARK house, by which once more I stand,
Here in the long unlovely street,
Doors, where my heart was used to beat
So quickly, waiting for a hand,

A hand that can be clasped no more, —
Behold me, for I cannot sleep,
And like a guilty thing I creep
At earliest morning to the door.

He is not here ; but far away
The noise of life begins again,
And ghastly through the drizzling rain
On the bald street breaks the blank day.

VIII.

A HAPPY lover who has come
 To look on her that loves him well,
 Who lights, and rings the gateway bell,
And learns her gone, and far from home,

He saddens, all the magic light
 Dies off at once from bower and hall,
 And all the place is dark, and all
The chambers emptied of delight.

So find I every pleasant spot
 In which we two were wont to meet,
 The field, the chamber, and the street,
For all is dark, where thou art not.

Yet as that other, wandering there
 In those deserted walks, may find
 A flower beat with rain and wind,
Which once she fostered up with care ;

So seems it in my deep regret,
 O my forsaken heart, with thee,
 And this poor flower of poesy,
Which, little cared for, fades not yet.

But since it pleased a vanished eye,
 I go to plant it on his tomb,
 That if it can it there may bloom,
Or dying there at least may die.

IX.

FAIR ship, that from the Italian shore
 Sailest the placid ocean plains,
 With my lost Arthur's loved remains,
Spread thy full wings, and waft him o'er!

So draw him home to those that mourn,
 In vain; a favorable speed
 Ruffle thy mirrored mast, and lead
Through prosperous floods his holy urn!

All night no ruder air perplex
 Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor, bright
 As our pure love, through early light
Shall glimmer on the dewy decks!

Sphere all your lights around, above;
 Sleep, gentle heavens, before the prow;
 Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps now,
My friend, the brother of my love!



My Arthur! whom I shall not see
Till all my widowed race be run;
Dear as the mother to the son,
More than my brothers are to me!

1.

I HEAR the noise about thy keel ;
 I hear the bell struck in the night ;
 I see the cabin-window bright ;
I see the sailor at the wheel.

Thou bringest the sailor to his wife ;
 And travelled men from foreign lands ;
 And letters unto trembling hands ;
And, thy dark freight, a vanished life.

So bring him : we have idle dreams :
 This look of quiet flatters thus
 Our home-bred fancies : oh, to us,
The fools of habit, sweeter seems

To rest beneath the clover sod,
 That takes the sunshine and the rains,
 Or where the kneeling hamlet drains
The chalice of the grapes of God,

Than if with thee the roaring wells
Should gulf him fathom deep in brine;
And hands so often clasped in mine
Should toss with tangle and with shells.

XL

CALM is the morn, without a sound,
Calm as to suit a calmer grief,
And only through the faded leaf
The chestnut pattering to the ground :

Calm and deep peace on this high wold,
And on these dews that drench the furze,
And all the silvery gossamers
That twinkle into green and gold :

Calm and still light on yon great plain,
That sweeps, with all its autumn bowers,
And crowded farms and lessening towers,
To mingle with the bounding main :

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,
These leaves that redden to the fall ;
And in my heart, if calm at all,
If any calm, a calm despair :

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,
And waves that sway themselves in rest,
And dead calm in that noble breast
Which heaves but with the heaving deep.

XII.

Lo! as a dove when up she springs,
 To bear through Heaven a tale of woe
 Some dolorous message knit below
The wild pulsation of her wings ;

Like her I go : I cannot stay ;
 I leave this mortal ark behind,
 A weight of nerves without a mind,
And leave the cliffs, and haste away

O'er ocean mirrors rounded large,
 And reach the glow of southern skies,
 And see the sails at distance rise,
And linger weeping on the marge,

And saying, " Comes he thus, my friend ?
 Is this the end of all my care ?"
 And circle moaning in the air :
" Is this the end ? Is this the end ?"

And forward dart again, and play
About the prow, and back return
To where the body sits, and learn
That I have been an hour away.

XIII.

TEARS of the widower, when he sees
A late-lost form that sleep reveals,
And moves his doubtful arms, and feels
Her place is empty, fall like these,

Which weep a loss forever new,
A void where heart on heart reposed ;
And, where warm hands have pressed and closed,
Silence, till I be silent too.

Which weep the comrade of my choice,
An awful thought, a life removed,
The human-hearted man I loved,
A spirit, not a breathing voice.

Come, Time, and teach me many years
I do not suffer in a dream ;
For now so strange do these things seem,
Mine eyes have leisure for their tears

My fancies time to rise on wing,
And glance about the approaching sails,
As though they brought but merchants' bales,
And not the burthen that they bring.

XIV.

If one should bring me this report,
That thou hadst touched the land to-day,
And I went down unto the quay,
And found thee lying in the port ;

And standing, muffled round with woe,
Should see thy passengers in rank
Come stepping lightly down the plank,
And beckoning unto those they know ;

And if along with these should come
The man I held as half divine ;
Should strike a sudden hand in mine,
And ask a thousand things of home ;

And I should tell him all my pain,
And how my life had drooped of late,
And he should sorrow o'er my state,
And marvel what possessed my brain ;

And I perceive no touch of change,
No hint of death in all his frame,
But found him all in all the same,
I should not feel it to be strange.

XV.

To-NIGHT the winds began to rise
And roar from yonder dropping day;
The last red leaf is whirled away,
The rooks are blown about the skies;

The forest cracked, the waters curled,
The cattle huddled on the lea;
And wildly dashed on tower and tree
The sunbeam strikes along the world;

And but for fancies, which aver
That all thy motions gently pass
Athwart a plane of molten glass,
I scarce could brook the strain and stir

That makes the barren branches loud;
And but for fear it is not so,
The wild unrest that lives in woe
Would dote and pore on yonder cloud

That rises upward always higher,
And onward drags a laboring breast,
And topples round the dreary west,
A looming bastion fringed with fire.

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XVI.

WHAT words are these have fallen from me ?

Can calm despair and wild unrest

Be tenants of a single breast,

Or sorrow such a changeling be ?

Or doth she only seem to take

The touch of change in calm or storm ;

But knows no more of transient form

In her deep self, than some dead lake

That holds the shadow of a lark

Hung in the shadow of a heaven ?

Or has the shock, so harshly given,

Confused me like the unhappy bark

That strikes by night a craggy shelf,

And staggers blindly ere she sink ?

And stunned me from my power to think,

And all my knowledge of myself ;

And made me that delirious man
Whose fancy fuses old and new,
And flashes into false and true,
And mingles all without a plan ?

XVII.

THOU comest, much wept for ; such a breeze
 Compelled thy canvas, and my prayer
 Was as the whisper of an air
To breathe thee over lonely seas.

For I in spirit saw thee move
 Through circles of the bounding sky ;
 Week after week : the days go by :
Come quick, thou bringest all I love.

Henceforth, wherever thou mayst roam,
 My blessing, like a line of light,
 Is on the waters day and night,
And like a beacon guards thee home.

So may whatever tempest mars
 Mid-ocean spare thee, sacred bark ;
 And balmy drops in summer dark
Slide from the bosom of the stars.

So kind an office hath been done,
Such precious relics brought by thee ;
The dust of him I shall not see
Till all my widowed race be run.

XVIII.

'T is well, 't is something, we may stand
Where he in English earth is laid,
And from his ashes may be made
The violet of his native land.

'T is little ; but it looks in truth
As if the quiet bones were blest
Among familiar names to rest,
And in the places of his youth.

Come, then, pure hands, and bear the head
That sleeps or wears the mask of sleep ;
And come, whatever loves to weep,
And hear the ritual of the dead.

Ah ! yet, even yet, if this might be,
I, falling on his faithful heart,
Would, breathing through his lips, impart
The life that almost dies in me :

That dies not, but endures with pain,
And slowly forms the firmer mind,
Treasuring the look it cannot find,
The words that are not heard again.

XIX.

THE Danube to the Severn gave
The darkened heart that beat no more ;
They laid him by the pleasant shore,
And in the hearing of the wave.

There twice a day the Severn fills,
The salt sea-water passes by,
And hushes half the babbling Wye,
And makes a silence in the hills.

The Wye is hushed nor moved along ;
And hushed my deepest grief of all,
When, filled with tears that cannot fall,
I brim with sorrow drowning song.

The tide flows down, the wave again
Is vocal in its wooded walls :
My deeper anguish also falls,
And I can speak a little then.

THE lesser griefs, that may be said,
 That breathe a thousand tender vows,
 Are but as servants in a house
Where lies the master newly dead ;

Who speak their feeling as it is,
 And weep the fulness from the mind :
 " It will be hard," they say, " to find
Another service such as this."

My lighter moods are like to these,
 That out of words a comfort win ;
 But there are other griefs within,
And tears that at their fountain freeze ;

For by the hearth the children sit
 Cold in that atmosphere of Death,
 And scarce endure to draw the breath,
Or like to noiseless phantoms flit ;

But open converse is there none,
So much the vital spirits sink
To see the vacant chair, and think,
"How good! how kind! and he is gone."

XXI.

I SING to him that rests below,
 And, since the grasses round me wave,
 I take the grasses of the grave,
And make them pipes whereon to blow.

The traveller hears me now and then,
 And sometimes harshly will he speak :
 " This fellow would make weakness weak,
And melt the waxen hearts of men."

Another answers, " Let him be ;
 He loves to make parade of pain,
 That with his piping he may gain
The praise that comes to constancy."

A third is wroth : " Is this an hour
 For private sorrow's barren song,
 When more and more the people throng
The chairs and thrones of civil power ?

“ A time to sicken and to swoon,
When science reaches forth her arms
To feel from world to world, and charms
Her secret from the latest moon ? ”

Behold, ye speak an idle thing :
Ye never knew the sacred dust ;
I do but sing because I must,
And pipe but as the linnets sing.

And unto one her note is gay,
For now her little ones have ranged :
And unto one her note is changed,
Because her brood is stolen away.

XXII.

THE path by which we twain did go,
Which led by tracts that pleased us well,
Through four sweet years arose and fell,
From flower to flower, from snow to snow.

And we with singing cheered the way,
And crowned with all the season lent,
From April on to April went,
And glad at heart from May to May.

But where the path we walk'd began
To slant the fifth autumnal slope,
As we descended, following Hope,
There sat the Shadow feared of man ;

Who broke our fair companionship,
And spread his mantle dark and cold ;
And wrapped thee formless in the fold,
And dulled the murmur on thy lip ;

And bore thee where I could not see
Nor follow, though I walk in haste ;
And think that, somewhere in the waste,
The Shadow sits and waits for me.

XXIII.

Now, sometimes in my sorrow shut,
Or breaking into song by fits ;
Alone, alone, to where he sits,
The Shadow cloaked from head to foot,

Who keeps the keys of all the creeds,
I wander, often falling lame,
And looking back to whence I came,
Or on to where the pathway leads ;

And crying, How changed from where it ran
Through lands where not a leaf was dumb
But all the lavish hills would hum
The murmur of a happy Pan :

When each by turns was guide to each,
And Fancy light from Fancy caught,
And Thought leapt out to wed with Thought,
Ere Thought could wed itself with Speech :

And all we met was fair and good,
And all was good that Time could bring,
And all the secret of the Spring
Moved in the chambers of the blood :

And many an old philosophy
On Argive heights divinely sang,
And round us all the thicket rang
To many a flute of Arcady.

XXIV.

AND was the day of my delight
As pure and perfect as I say ?
The very source and fount of Day
Is dashed with wandering isles of night.

If all was good and fair we met,
This earth had been the Paradise
It never looked to human eyes
Since Adam left his garden yet.

And is it that the haze of grief
Hath stretched my former joy so great ?
The lowness of the present state,
That sets the past in this relief ?

Or that the past will always win
A glory from its being far ;
And orb into the perfect star
We saw not, when we moved therein ?

XXV.

I know that this was Life, — the track
Whereon with equal feet we fared ;
And then, as now, the day prepared
The daily burden for the back.

But this it was that made me move
As light as carrier-birds in air :
I loved the weight I had to bear,
Because it needed help of Love ;

Nor could I weary, heart or limb,
When mighty Love would cleave in twain
The lading of a single pain,
And part it, giving half to him.

XXVI.

STILL onward winds the dreary way :
I with it ; for I long to prove
No lapse of moons can canker Love,
Whatever fickle tongues may say.

And if that eye which watches guilt
And goodness, and hath power to see
Within the green the mouldered tree,
And towers fallen as soon as built, —

O, if indeed that eye foresee,
Or see, (in Him is no before,)
In more of life true life no more,
And Love the indifference to be,

So might I find, ere yet the morn
Breaks hither over Indian seas,
That Shadow waiting with the keys,
To cloak me from my proper scorn.

XXVII.

I ENVY not, in any moods,
The captive void of noble rage,
The linnet born within the cage,
That never knew the summer woods :

I envy not the beast that takes
His license in the field of time,
Unfettered by the sense of crime,
To whom a conscience never wakes ;

Nor, what may count itself as blest,
The heart that never plighted troth,
But stagnates in the weeds of sloth,
Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, whate'er befall ;
I feel it, when I sorrow most ;
'T is better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all.

XXVIII.

THE time draws near the birth of Christ :
The moon is hid ; the night is still ;
The Christmas bells from hill to hill
Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,
From far and near, on mead and moor,
Swell out and fail, as if a door
Were shut between me and the sound :

Each voice four changes on the wind,
That now dilate, and now decrease,
Peace and good-will, good-will and peace,
Peace and good-will, to all mankind.

This year I slept and woke with pain,
I almost wished no more to wake,
And that my hold on life would break
Before I heard those bells again :

But they my troubled spirit rule,
For they controlled me when a boy;
They bring me sorrow touched with joy,
The merry, merry bells of Yule.

XXIX.

With such compelling cause to grieve
As daily vexes household peace,
And chains regret to his decease,
How dare we keep our Christmas eve ;

Which brings no more a welcome guest
To enrich the threshold of the night
With showered largess of delight,
In dance and song and game and jest.

Yet go, and while the holly-boughs
Entwine the cold baptismal font,
Make one wreath more for Use and Wont
That guard the portals of the house ;

Old sisters of a day gone by,
Gray nurses, loving nothing new ;
Why should they miss their yearly due
Before their time ? They too will die.

XXX.

WITH trembling fingers did we weave
The holly round the Christmas hearth ;
A rainy cloud possessed the earth,
And sadly fell our Christmas eve.

At our old pastimes in the hall
We gambolled, making vain pretence
Of gladness, with an awful sense
Of one mute Shadow watching all.

We paused : the winds were in the beech :
We heard them sweep the winter land ;
And in a circle hand in hand
Sat silent, looking each at each.

Then echo-like our voices rang ;
We sung, though every eye was dim,
A merry song we sang with him
Last year : impetuously we sang :

We ceased : a gentler feeling crept
 Upon us : surely rest is meet :
 “ They rest,” we said, “ their sleep is sweet,”
And silence followed, and we wept.

Our voices took a higher range ;
 Once more we sang : “ They do not die,
 Nor lose their mortal sympathy,
Nor change to us, although they change ;

“ Rapt from the fickle and the frail,
 With gathered power, yet the same,
 Pierces the keen seraphic flame
From orb to orb, from veil to veil.

“ Rise, happy morn ! rise, holy morn !
 Draw forth the cheerful day from night :
 O Father ! touch the east, and light
The light that shone when Hope was born.”

XXXI.

WHEN LAZARUS left his charnel-cave,
And home to Mary's house returned,
Was this demanded, —if he yearned
To hear her weeping by his grave?

“Where wert thou, brother, those four days?”
There lives no record of reply,
Which, telling what it is to die,
Had surely added praise to praise.

From every house the neighbors met,
The streets were filled with joyful sound;
A solemn gladness even crowned
The purple brows of Olivet.

Behold a man raised up by Christ!
The rest remaineth unrevealed;
He told it not; or something sealed
The lips of that Evangelist.

XXXII.

HER eyes are homes of silent prayer,
Nor other thought her mind admits
But, he was dead, and there he sits,
And he that brought him back is there.

Then one deep love doth supersede
All other, when her ardent gaze
Roves from the living brother's face,
And rests upon the Life indeed.

All subtle thought, all curious fears,
Borne down by gladness so complete,
She bows, she bathes the Saviour's feet
With costly spikenard and with tears.

Thrice blest whose lives are faithful prayers,
Whose loves in higher love endure ;
What souls possess themselves so pure,
Or is there blessedness like theirs ?

XXXIII.

O THOU that after toil and storm
 Mayst seem to have reached a purer air,
 Whose faith has centre everywhere,
Nor cares to fix itself to form,

Leave thou thy sister, when she prays,
 Her early Heaven, her happy views;
 Nor thou with shadowed hint confuse
A life that leads melodious days.

Her faith through form is pure as thine,
 Her hands are quicker unto good.
 O, sacred be the flesh and blood
To which she links a truth divine!

See, thou that countest reason ripe
 In holding by the law within,
 Thou fail not in a world of sin,
And e'en for want of such a type.

XXXIV.

My own dim life should teach me this,
That life shall live forevermore,
Else earth is darkness at the core,
And dust and ashes all that is ;

This round of green, this orb of flame.
Fantastic beauty ; such as lurks
In some wild Poet, when he works
Without a conscience or an aim.

What then were God to such as I ?
'T were hardly worth my while to choose
Of things all mortal, or to use
A little patience ere I die.

'T were best at once to sink to peace,
Like birds the charming serpent draws,
To drop head-foremost in the jaws
Of vacant darkness, and to cease.

XXXV.

YET if some voice that man could trust
Should murmur from the narrow house :
The cheeks drop in ; the body bows ;
Man dies : nor is there hope in dust :

Might I not say, yet even here,
But for one hour, oh Love, I strive
To keep so sweet a thing alive ?
But I should turn mine ears and hear

The moanings of the homeless sea,
The sound of streams that, swift or slow,
Draw down Æonian hills, and sow
The dust of continents to be ;

And Love would answer, with a sigh,
“ The sound of that forgetful shore
Will change my sweetness more and more,
Half dead to know that I shall die.”

O me! what profits it to put
 An idle case? If Death were seen
 At first as Death, Love had not been,
Or been in narrowest working shut,

Mere fellowship of sluggish moods,
 Or in his coarsest Satyr-shape
 Had bruised the herb and crushed the grape,
And basked and batted in the woods.

XXXVI.

THOUGH truths in manhood darkly join,
Deep-seated in our mystic frame,
We yield all blessing to the name
Of Him that made them current coin ;

For wisdom dealt with mortal powers,
Where Truth in closest words shall fail,
When Truth embodied in a tale
Shall enter in at lowly doors.

And so the Word had breath, and wrought
With human hands the creed of creeds
In loveliness of perfect deeds,
More strong than all poetic thought ;

Which he may read that binds the sheaf,
Or builds the house, or digs the grave,
And those wild eyes that watch the wave
In roarings round the coral reef.

XXXVII.

URANIA speaks with darkened brow :

“Thou pratest here where thou art least
This faith has many a purer priest,
And many an abler voice, than thou ;

“Go down beside thy native rill,
On thy Parnassus set thy feet,
And hear thy laurel whisper sweet
About the ledges of the hill.”

And my Melpomene replies,
A touch of shame upon her cheek
“I am not worthy but to speak
Of thy prevailing mysteries ;

“For I am but an earthly Muse,
And owning but a little art
To lull with song an aching heart,
And render human love his dues ;

“ But brooding on the dear one dead,
 And all he said of things divine,
 (And dear as sacramental wine
To dying lips is all he said,)

“ I murmured, as I came along,
 Of comfort clasped in truth revealed ;
 And loitered in the master's field,
And darkened sanctities with song.”

XXXVIII.

With weary steps I loiter on,
 Though always under altered skies
 The purple from the distance dies,
My prospect and horizon gone.

No joy the blowing season gives,
 The herald melodies of spring,
 But in the songs I love to sing
A doubtful gleam of solace lives.

If any care for what is here
 Survive in spirits rendered free,
 Then are these songs I sing of thee
Not all ungrateful to thine ear.

XXXIX.

COULD we forget the widowed hour,
 And look on Spirits breathed away,
 As on a maiden in the day
When first she wears her orange-flower!

When crowned with blessing she doth rise
 To take her latest leave of home,
 And hopes and light regrets that come
Make April of her tender eyes ;

And doubtful joys the father move,
 And tears are on the mother's face,
 As parting, with a long embrace,
She enters other realms of love ;

Her office there to rear, to teach,
 Becoming, as is meet and fit,
 A link among the days, to knit
The generations each with each ;

And, doubtless, unto thee is given
 A life that bears immortal fruit
 In such great offices as suit
The full-grown energies of heaven.

Ay me, the difference I discern!
 How often shall her old fireside
 Be cheered with tidings of the bride!
How often she herself return,

And tell them all they would have told,
 And bring her babe, and make her boast,
 Till even those that missed her most
Shall count new things as dear as old!

But thou and I have shaken hands,
 Till growing winters lay me low;
 My paths are in the fields I know,
And thine in undiscovered lands.

XL.

THY spirit, ere our fatal loss,
Did ever rise from high to higher;
As mounts the heavenward altar-fire,
As flies the lighter through the gross.

But thou art turned to something strange,
And I have lost the links that bound
Thy changes; here upon the ground;
No more partaker of thy change.

Deep folly! yet that this could be,—
That I could wing my will with might
To leap the grades of life and light,
And flash at once, my friend, to thee:

For though my nature rarely yields
To that vague fear implied in death;
Nor shudders at the gulfs beneath,
The howlings from forgotten fields;

Yet oft, when sundown skirts the moor,
 An inner trouble I behold,
 A spectral doubt which makes me cold,
That I shall be thy mate no more,

Though following with an upward mind
 The wonders that have come to thee,
 Through all the secular to be,
But evermore a life behind.

XL.

I vex my heart with fancies dim :
 He still outstripped me in the race ;
 It was but unity of place
That made me dream I ranked with him.

And so may Place retain us still,
 And he the much-beloved again,
 A lord of large experience, train
To riper growth the mind and will :

And what delights can equal those
 That stir the spirit's inner deeps,
 When one that loves, but knows not, reaps
A truth from one that loves and knows ?

XLII.

If Sleep and Death be truly one,
And every spirit's folded bloom
Through all its intervital gloom
In some long trance should slumber on,

Unconscious of the sliding hour,
Bare of the body, might it last,
And silent traces of the past
Be all the color of the flower :

So then were nothing lost to man ;
But that still garden of the souls
In many a figured leaf enrolls
The total world since life began :

And love would last as pure and whole
As when he loved me here in Time,
And at the spiritual prime
Rewaken with the dawning soul.

XLIII.

How fares it with the happy dead ?
For here the man is more and more ;
But he forgets the days before
God shut the doorways of his head.

The days have vanished, tone and tint,
And yet perhaps the hoarding sense
Gives out, at times, (he knows not whence,)
A little flash, a mystic hint ;

And in the long, harmonious years
(If Death so taste Lethean springs)
May some dim touch of earthly things
Surprise thee ranging with thy peers.

If such a dreamy touch should fall,
O, turn thee round, resolve the doubt,
My guardian angel will speak out
In that high place, and tell thee all.

XLIV.

THE baby new to earth and sky,
What time his tender palm is pressed
Against the circle of the breast,
Has never thought that "this is I:"

But as he grows he gathers much,
And learns the use of "I," and "me,"
And finds "I am not what I see,
And other than the things I touch:"

So rounds he to a separate mind
From whence clear memory may begin,
As through the frame that binds him in
His isolation grows defined.

This use may lie in blood and breath,
Which else were fruitless of their due,
Had man to learn himself anew
Beyond the second birth of Death.

XLV.

WE ranging down this lower track,
The path we came by, thorn and flower,
Is shadowed by the growing hour,
Lest life should fail in looking back.

So be it: there no shade can last
In that deep dawn behind the tomb,
But clear from marge to marge shall bloom
The eternal landscape of the past;

A lifelong tract of time revealed;
The fruitful hours of still increase;
Days ordered in a wealthy peace,
And those five years its richest field.

O Love! thy province were not large,
A bounded field, nor stretching far,
Look also, Love, a brooding star,
A rosy warmth from marge to marge.

XLVI.

THAT each, who seems a separate whole,
Should move his rounds, and fusing all
The skirts of self again, should fall
Remerging in the general Soul,

Is faith as vague as all unsweet :
Eternal form shall still divide
The eternal soul from all beside ;
And I shall know him when we meet :

And we shall sit at endless feast,
Enjoying each the other's good ;
What vaster dream can hit the mood
Of Love on earth ? He seeks at least

Upon the last and sharpest height,
Before the spirits fade away,
Some landing-place, to clasp and say,
" Farewell ! We lose ourselves in light."

XLVII.

If these brief lays, of Sorrow born,
 Were taken to be such as closed
 Grave doubts and answers here proposed,
Then these were such as men might scorn :

Her care is not to part and prove ;
 She takes, when harsher moods remit,
 What slender shade of doubt may flit,
And makes it vassal unto love :

And hence, indeed, she sports with words ;
 But better serves a wholesome law,
 And holds it sin and shame to draw
The deepest measure from the chords :

Nor dare she trust a larger lay,
 But rather loosens from the lip
 Short swallow-flights of song, that dip
Their wings in tears, and skim away .

XLVIII.

FROM art, from nature, from the schools,
 Let random influences glance,
 Like light in many a shivered lance
 That breaks about the dappled pools :

The lightest wave of thought shall lisp,
 The fancy's tenderest eddy wreath,
 The slightest air of song shall breathe,
 To make the sullen surface crisp.

And look thy look, and go thy way,
 But blame not thou the winds that make
 The seeming-wanton ripple break,
 The tender-pencilled shadow play.

Beneath all fancied hopes and fears,
 Ay me! the sorrow deepens down,
 Whose muffled motions blindly drown
 The bases of my life in tears.

XLIX.

Be near me when my light is low,
When the blood creeps, and the nerves prick
And tingle; and the heart is sick,
And all the wheels of Being slow.

Be near me when the sensuous frame
Is racked with pangs that conquer trust,
And time, a maniac, scattering dust,
And life, a Fury, slinging flame.

Be near me when my faith is dry,
And men the flies of latter spring,
That lay their eggs, and sting and sing,
And weave their petty cells and die.

Be near me when I fade away,
To point the term of human strife,
And on the low, dark verge of life,
The twilight of eternal day.

L.

Do we indeed desire the dead
Should still be near us at our side?
Is there no baseness we would hide?
No inner vileness that we dread?

Shall he for whose applause I strove,
I had such reverence for his blame,
See with clear eye some hidden shame,
And I be lessened in his love?

I wrong the grave with fears untrue:
Shall love be blamed for want of faith?
There must be wisdom with great Death;
The dead shall look me through and through.

Be near us when we climb or fall:
Ye watch, like God, the rolling hours
With larger, other eyes than ours,
To make allowance for us all.

LL

I CANNOT love thee as I ought,
For love reflects the thing beloved ;
My words are only words, and moved
Upon the topmost froth of thought.

“ Yet blame not thou thy plaintive song,”
The Spirit of true love replied ;
“ Thou canst not move me from thy side,
Nor human frailty do me wrong.

“ What keeps a spirit wholly true
To that ideal which he bears ?
What record ? not the sinless years
That breathed beneath the Syrian blue ;

“ So fret not, like an idle girl,
That life is dashed with flecks of sin.
Abide : thy wealth is gathered in,
When Time hath sundered shell from pearl.”

LII.

How many a father have I seen,
A sober man, among his boys,
Whose youth was full of foolish noise,
Who wears his manhood hale and green !

And dare we to this doctrine give,
That had the wild oat not been sown,
The soil, left barren, had not grown
The grain by which a man may live ?

O, if we held the doctrine sound
For life outliving heats of youth,
Yet who would preach it as a truth
To those that eddy round and round ?

Hold thou the good : define it well :
For fear divine philosophy
Should push beyond her mark, and be
Procress to the Lords of Hell.

LIII.

O, YET we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt and taints of blood ;

That nothing walks with aimless feet ;
That not one life shall be destroyed,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete ;

That not a worm is cloven in vain ;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivelled in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold ! we know not anything ;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last, — far off, — at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream : but what am I ?
An infant crying in the night :
An infant crying for the light :
And with no language but a cry,

LIV.

THE wish, that of the living whole
No life may fail beyond the grave,—
Derives it not from what we have
The likest God within the soul?

Are God and Nature then at strife,
That Nature lends such evil dreams?
So careful of the type she seems,
So careless of the single life;

That I, considering everywhere
Her secret meaning in her deeds,
And finding that of fifty seeds
She often brings but one to bear;

I falter where I firmly trod,
And falling with my weight of cares
Upon the great world's altar-stairs,
That slope through darkness up to God;

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
And gather dust and chaff, and call
To what I feel is Lord of all,
And faintly trust the larger hope.

LV.

“ So careful of the type ? ” but no.
From scarped cliff and quarried stone
She cries, “ A thousand types are gone :
I care for nothing, all shall go.

“ Thou makest thine appeal to me :
I bring to life, I bring to death :
The spirit does but mean the breath :
I know no more.” And he, shall he,

Man, her last work, who seemed so fair,
Such splendid purpose in his eyes,
Who rolled the psalm to wintry skies,
Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,

Who trusted God was love indeed,
And love Creation's final law, —
Though Nature red in tooth and claw
With ravine shrieked against his creed, —

Who loved, who suffered countless ills,
Who battled for the True, the Just,
Be blown about the desert dust,
Or sealed within the iron hills ?

No more ? A monster, then, a dream,
A discord. Dragons of the prime,
That tare each other in their slime,
Were mellow music matched with him.

O life as futile, then, as frail !
O for thy voice to soothe and bless !
What hope of answer, or redress ?
Behind the veil, behind the veil.

LVL

PEACE, come away : the song of woe
Is after all an earthly song :
Peace, come away ; we do him wrong
To sing so wildly ; let us go.

Come, let us go ; your cheeks are pale,
But half my life I leave behind ;
Methinks my friend is richly shrined,
But I shall pass ; my work will fail.

Yet in these ears, till hearing dies,
One set slow bell will seem to toll
The passing of the sweetest soul
That ever looked with human eyes.

I hear it now, and o'er and o'er,
Eternal greetings to the dead ;
And "Ave, Ave, Ave," said,
"Adieu, adieu," forevermore !

LVII.

In those sad words I took farewell !
Like echoes in sepulchral halls,
As drop by drop the water falls
In vaults and catacombs, they fell ;

And, falling, idly broke the peace
Of hearts that beat from day to day,
Half-conscious of their dying clay,
And those cold crypts where they shall cease.

The high Muse answered : " Wherefore grieve
Thy brethren with a fruitless tear ?
Abide a little longer here,
And thou shalt take a nobler leave."

LVIII.

He passed ; a soul of nobler tone :
My spirit loved and loves him yet,
Like some poor girl whose heart is set
On one whose rank exceeds her own.

He mixing with his proper sphere,
She finds the baseness of her lot ;
Half jealous of she knows not what,
And envying all that meet him there.

The little village looks forlorn ;
She sighs amid her narrow days,
Moving about the household ways,
In that dark house where she was born.

The foolish neighbors come and go,
And tease her till the day draws by ;
At night she weeps, " How vain am I !
How should he love a thing so low ? "

LIX.

If, in thy second state sublime,
Thy ransomed reason change replies
With all the circle of the wise,
The perfect flower of human time ;

And if thou cast thine eyes below,
How dimly characterized and slight,
How dwarfed a growth of cold and night,
How blanched with darkness, must I grow !

Yet turn thee to the doubtful shore,
Where thy first form was made a man ;
I loved thee, Spirit, and love, nor can
The soul of Shakspeare love thee more.

x

LX.

THOUGH if an eye that 's downward cast
 Could make thee somewhat blench or fail,
 So be my love an idle tale,
And fading legend of the past ;

And thou, as one that once declined,
 When he was little more than boy,
 On some unworthy heart with joy,
But lives to wed an equal mind ;

And breathes a novel world, the while
 His other passion wholly dies,
 Or in the light of deeper eyes
Is matter for a flying smile.

LXI

YET pity for a horse o'erdriven,
And love in which my hound has part,
Can hang no weight upon my heart,
In its assumptions up to heaven ;

And I am so much more than these,
As thou, perchance, art more than I,
And yet I spare them sympathy,
And I would set their pains at ease.

So mayst thou watch me where I weep,
As, unto vaster motions bound,
The circuits of thine orbit round
A higher height, a deeper deep.

LXII.

Dost thou look back on what hath been,
As some divinely gifted man,
Whose life in low estate began,
And on a simple village green ;

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,
And grasps the skirts of happy chance,
And breasts the blows of circumstance,
And grapples with his evil star ;

Who makes by force his merit known,
And lives to clutch the golden keys,
To mould a mighty state's decrees,
And shape the whisper of the throne ;

And moving up from high to higher,
Becomes on Fortune's crowning slope
The pillar of a people's hope,
The centre of a world's desire ;

Yet feels, as in a pensive dream,
 When all his active powers are still,
 A distant dearness in the hill,
A secret sweetness in the stream,

The limit of his narrower fate,
 While yet beside its vocal springs
 He played at counsellors and kings,
With one that was his earliest mate ;

Who ploughs with pain his native lea,
 And reaps the labor of his hands,
 Or in the furrow musing stands :
“ Does my old friend remember me ? ”

LXIII.

SWEET soul ! do with me as thou wilt ;
I lull a fancy trouble-tost
With " Love 's too precious to be lost,
A little grain shall not be spilt."

And in that solace can I sing,
Till out of painful phases wrought
There flutters up a happy thought,
Self-balanced on a lightsome wing ;

Since we deserved the name of friends,
And thine effect so lives in me,
A part of mine may live in thee,
And move thee on to noble ends.

LXIV.

You thought my heart too far diseased ;
You wonder when my fancies play,
To find me gay among the gay,
Like one with any trifle pleased.

The shade by which my life was crossed,
Which makes a desert in the mind,
Has made me kindly with my kind,
And like to him whose sight is lost ;

Whose feet are guided through the land,
Whose jest among his friends is free,
Who takes the children on his knee,
And winds their curls about his hand ;

He plays with threads, he beats his chair
For pastime, dreaming of the sky ;
His inner day can never die,
His night of loss is always there.

LXV.

WHEN on my bed the moonlight falls
I know that in thy place of rest,
By that broad water of the west
There comes a glory on the walls :

Thy marble bright in dark appears,
As slowly steals a silver flame
Along the letters of thy name,
And o'er the number of thy years.

The mystic glory swims away ;
From off my bed the moonlight dies ;
And closing eaves of wearied eyes
I sleep till dusk is tipped in gray :

And then I know the mist is drawn
A lucid veil from coast to coast,
And in the chancel like a ghost
Thy tablet glimmers to the dawn.

LXVI.

WHEN in the down I sink my head,
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, times my breath ;
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, knows not Death,
Nor can I dream of thee as dead :

I walk as ere I walked forlorn,
When all our path was fresh with dew,
And all the bugle breezes blew
Reveillée to the breaking morn.

But what is this ? I turn about,
I find a trouble in thine eye,
Which makes me sad, I know not why,
Nor can my dream resolve the doubt :

But ere the lark hath left the lea
I wake, and I discern the truth ;
It is the trouble of my youth
That foolish sleep transfers to thee.

LXVII.

I DREAMED there would be Spring no more,
That Nature's ancient power was lost :
The streets were black with smoke and frost,
They chattered trifles at the door.

I wandered from the noisy town,
I found a wood with thorny boughs ;
I took the thorns to bind my brows,
I wore them like a civic crown.

I met with scoffs, I met with scorns,
From youth and babe and hoary hairs :
They called me in the public squares
The fool that wears a crown of thorns.

They called me fool, they called me child :
I found an angel of the night :
The voice was low, the look was bright,
He looked upon my crown and smiled :

He reached the glory of a hand,
That seemed to touch it into leaf:
The voice was not the voice of grief;
The words were hard to understand.

LXVIII.

I CANNOT see the features right,
 When on the gloom I strive to paint
 The face I know ; the hues are faint,
And mix with hollow masks of night :

Cloud-towers by ghostly masons wrought,
 A gulf that ever shuts and gapes,
 A hand that points, and palled shapes
In shadowy thoroughfares of thought ;

And crowds that stream from yawning doors,
 And shoals of puckered faces drive ;
 Dark bulks that tumble half alive,
And lazy lengths on boundless shores :

Till all at once, beyond the will,
 I hear a wizard music roll,
 And through a lattice on the soul
Looks thy fair face, and makes it still.

LXIX.

SLEEP, kinsman thou to death and trance
And madness, thou hast forged at last
A night-long Present of the Past
In which we went through summer France.

Hadst thou such credit with the soul?
So bring an opiate treble-strong,
Drug down the blindfold sense of wrong,
That thus my pleasure might be whole;

While now we talk, as once we talked
Of men and minds, the dust of change,
The days that grow to something strange,
In walking as of old we walked

Beside the river's wooded reach,
The fortress, and the mountain ridge,
The cataract flashing from the bridge,
The breaker breaking on the beach.

LXX.

RISEST thou thus, dim dawn, again,
And howlest, issuing out of night,
With blasts that blow the poplar white,
And lash with storm the streaming pane ?

Day, when my crowned estate begun
To pine in that reverse of doom,
Which sickened every living bloom,
And blurred the splendor of the sun ;

Who usherest in the dolorous hour
With thy quick tears that make the rose
Pull sideways, and the daisy close
Her crimson fringes to the shower ;

Who mightst have heaved a windless flame
Up the deep East, or, whispering, played
A checker-work of beam and shade
From hill to hill, yet looked the same,

As wan, as chill, as wild, as now ;
Day, marked as with some hideous crime,
When the dark hand struck down through time,
And cancelled nature's best : but thou,

Lift as thou mayst thy burthened brows
Through clouds that drench the morning star,
And whirl the ungarnered sheaf afar,
And sow the sky with flying boughs,

And up thy vault with roaring sound
Climb thy thick noon, disastrous day ;
Touch thy dull goal of joyless gray,
And hide thy shame beneath the ground.

LXXI.

So many worlds, so much to do,
 So little done, such things to be,
 How know I what had need of thee,
For thou wert strong as thou wert true?

The fame is quenched that I foresaw,
 The head hath missed an earthly wreath :
 I curse not nature ; no, nor death,
For nothing is that errs from law.

We pass : the path that each man trod
 Is dim, or will be dim, with weeds :
 What fame is left for human deeds
In endless age ? It rests with God.

O hollow wraith of dying fame,
 Fade wholly, while the soul exults,
 And self-infolds the large results
Of force that would have forged a name.

LXXII.

As sometimes in a dead man's face,
 To those that watch it more and more,
 A likeness hardly seen before
Comes out, — to some one of his race :

So, dearest, now thy brows are cold,
 I see thee what thou art, and know
 Thy likeness to the wise below,
Thy kindred with the great of old.

But there is more than I can see,
 And what I see I leave unsaid,
 Nor speak it, knowing Death has made
His darkness beautiful with thee.

LXXIII.

I LEAVE thy praises unexpressed
In verse that brings myself relief,
And by the measure of my grief
I leave thy greatness to be guessed ;

What practice, howsoe'er expert,
In fitting aptest words to things,
Or voice the richest-toned that sings,
Hath power to give thee as thou wert ?

I care not, in these fading days,
To raise a cry that lasts not long,
And round thee with the breeze of song
To stir a little dust of praise.

Thy leaf has perished in the green,
And, while we breathe beneath the sun,
The world which credits what is done
Is cold to all that might have been.

So here shall silence guard thy fame ;
But somewhere, out of human view,
Whate'er thy hands are set to do
Is wrought with tumult of acclaim.

LXXIV.

TAKE wings of fancy, and ascend,
And in a moment set thy face
Where all the starry heavens of space
Are sharpened to a needle's end ;

Take wings of foresight ; lighten through
The secular abyss to come,
And lo ! thy deepest lays are dumb
Before the mouldering of a yew ;

And if the matin songs, that woke
The darkness of our planet, last,
Thine own shall wither in the vast,
Ere half the lifetime of an oak.

Ere these have clothed their branchy bowers
With fifty Mays, thy songs are vain ;
And what are they when these remain
The ruined shells of hollow towers ?

LXXV.

WHAT hope is here for modern rhyme
To him, who turns a musing eye
On songs, and deeds, and lives, that lie
Foreshortened in the tract of time ?

These mortal lullabies of pain
May bind a book, may line a box,
May serve to curl a maiden's locks ;
Or, when a thousand moons shall wane,

A man upon a stall may find,
And, passing, turn the page that tells
A grief, — then changed to something else,
Sung by a long forgotten mind.

But what of that ? My darkened ways
Shall ring with music all the same ;
To breathe my loss is more than fame,
To utter love more sweet than praise.

LXXVI.

AGAIN at Christmas did we weave
The holly round the Christmas hearth,
The silent snow possessed the earth,
And calmly fell our Christmas eve ;

The yule-clog sparkled keen with frost,
No wing of wind the region swept,
But over all things brooding slept
The quiet sense of something lost.

As in the winters left behind,
Again our ancient games had place,
The mimic pictures breathing grace,
And dance and song and hoodman-blind.

Who showed a token of distress ?
No single tear, no type of pain :
O sorrow, then can sorrow wane ?
O grief, can grief be changed to less ?

O last regret, Regret can die !

No, — mixed with all this mystic frame,

Her deep relations are the same,

But with long use her tears are dry.

LXXVII.

"MORE than my brothers are to me,"—
Let this not vex thee, noble heart!
I know thee of what force thou art,
To hold the costliest love in fee.

But thou and I are one in kind,
As moulded like in nature's mint;
And hill and wood and field did print
The same sweet forms in either mind.

For us the same cold streamlet curled
Through all his eddying coves; the same
All winds that roam the twilight came
In whispers of the beauteous world.

At one dear knee we proffered vows,
One lesson from one book we learned,
Ere childhood's flaxen ringlet turned
To black and brown on kindred brows.

And so my wealth resembles thine,
 But he was rich where I was poor,
 And he supplied my want the more
As his unlikeness fitted mine.

LXXVIII.

If any vague desire should rise,
That holy Death, ere Arthur died,
Had moved me kindly from his side,
And dropped the dust on tearless eyes ;

Then fancy shapes, as fancy can,
The grief my loss in him had wrought,
A grief as deep as life or thought,
But stayed in peace with God and man.

I make a picture in the brain ;
I hear the sentence that he speaks ;
He bears the burthen of the weeks,
But turns his burthen into gain.

His credit thus shall set me free ;
And, influence-rich to soothe and save,
Unused example from the grave,
Reach out dead hands to comfort me.

LXXIX.

COULD I have said while he was here,
 " My love shall now no further range,
 There cannot come a mellow change,
For now is love mature in ear."

Love, then, had hope of richer store :
 What end is here to my complaint ?
 This haunting whisper makes me faint,
" More years had made me love thee more."

But Death returns an answer sweet :
 " My sudden frost was sudden gain,
 And gave all ripeness to the grain,
It might have drawn from after-heat."

LXXX.

I WAGE not any feud with Death
For changes wrought on form and face ;
No lower life that earth's embrace
May breed with him can fright my faith.

Eternal process moving on,
From state to state the spirit walks ;
And these are but the shattered stalks
Or ruined chrysalis of one.

Nor blame I Death, because he bare
The use of virtue out of earth ;
I know transplanted human worth
Will bloom to profit, elsewhere.

For this alone on Death I wreak
The wrath that garners in my heart ;
He put our lives so far apart
We cannot hear each other speak.

LXXXI.

Die down upon the northern shore,
O sweet new year, delaying long;
Thou doest expectant nature wrong,
Delaying long, delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded noons,
Thy sweetness from its proper place?
Can trouble live with April days,
Or sadness in the summer moons?

Bring orchis, bring the fox-glove spire,
The little speedwell's darling blue,
Deep tulips dashed with fiery dew
Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.

O thou, new year, delaying long,
Delayest the sorrow in my blood,
That longs to burst a frozen bud,
And flood a fresher throat with song.

LXXXII.

WHEN I contemplate, all alone,
The life that had been thine below.
And fix my thoughts on all the glow
To which thy crescent would have grown ;

I see thee sitting crowned with good,
A central warmth diffusing bliss
In glance and smile, and clasp and kiss,
On all the branches of thy blood ;

Thy blood, my friend, and partly mine ;
For now the day was drawing on,
When thou shouldst link thy life with one
Of mine own house, and boys of thine

Had babbled "Uncle" on my knee ;
But that remorseless iron hour
Made cypress of her orange-flower,
Despair of Hope, and earth of thee.

I seem to meet their least desire,
 To clap their cheeks, to call them mine.
 I see their unborn faces shine
Beside the never-lighted fire.

I see myself an honored guest,
 Thy partner in the flowery walk
 Of letters, genial table-talk,
Or deep dispute, and graceful jest :

While low thy prosperous labor fills
 The lips of men with honest praise,
 And sun by sun the happy days
Descend below the golden hills

With promise of a morn as fair ;
 And all the train of bounteous hours
 Conduct, by paths of growing powers,
To reverence and the silver hair ;

Till slowly worn her earthly robe,
 Her lavish mission richly wrought,
 Leaving great legacies of thought,
Thy spirit should fail from off the globe ;

What time mine own might also fleē,
As linked with thine in love and fate,
And, hovering o'er the dolorous strait
To the other shore, involved in thee,

Arrive at last the blessed goal,
And he that died in Holy Land
Would reach us out the shining hand,
And take us as a single soul.

What reed was that on which I leant?
Ah, backward fancy, wherefore wake
The old bitter ness again, and break
The low beginnings of content?

LXXXIII.

THIS truth came borne with bier and pall,
I felt it, when I sorrowed most,
'T is better to have loved and lost,
Than never to have loved at all ———

O true in word, and tried in deed,
Demanding, so to bring relief
To this which is our common grief,
What kind of life is that I lead ;

And whether trust in things above
Be dimmed of sorrow, or sustained,
And whether love for him have drained
My capabilities of love ;

Your words have virtue such as draws
A faithful answer from the breast,
Through light reproaches, half expressed,
And loyal unto kindly laws.

My blood an even tenor kept,
Till on mine ear this message falls,
That in Vienna's sacred walls
God's finger touched him, and he slept.

The great Intelligences fair
That range above our mortal state,
In circle round the blessed gate,
Received and gave him welcome there ;

And led him through the blissful climes,
And showed him in the fountain fresh
All knowledge that the sons of flesh
Shall gather in the cycled times.

But I remained, whose hopes were dim,
Whose life, whose thoughts, were little worth,
To wander on a darkened earth,
Where all things round me breathed of him.

O friendship, equal-poised control,
O heart, with kindest motion warm,
O sacred essence, other form,
O solemn ghost ! O crowned soul !

Yet none could better know than I
 How much of act at human hands
 The sense of human will demands,
By which we dare to live or die.

Whatever way my days decline,
 I felt and feel, though left alone,
 His being working in mine own,
The footsteps of his life in mine ;

A life that all the Muses decked
 With gifts of grace that might express
 All-comprehensive tenderness,
All-subtilizing intellect :

And so my passion hath not swerved
 To works of weakness, but I find
 An image comforting the mind,
And in my grief a strength reserved.

Likewise the imaginativé woe,
 That loved to handle spiritual strife,
 Diffused the shock through all my life,
But in the present broke the blow.

My pulses therefore beat again
For other friends that once I met;
Nor can it suit me to forget
The mighty hopes that make us men.

I woo your love : I count it crime
To mourn for any overmuch ;
I, the divided half of such
A friendship as had mastered Time ;

Which masters Time indeed, and is
Eternal, separate from fears.
The all-assuming months and years
Can take no part away from this :

But Summer on the steaming floods,
And Spring that swells the narrow brooks,
And Autumn with a noise of rooks,
That gather in the waning woods,

And every pulse of wind and wave
Recalls, in change of light or gloom,
My old affection of the tomb,
And my prime passion in the grave :

My old affection of the tomb,
A part of stillness yearns to speak :
" Arise, and get thee forth and seek
A friendship for the years to come.

" I watch thee from the quiet shore ;
Thy spirit up to mine can reach ;
But in dear words of human speech
We two communicate no more."

And I, " Can clouds of nature stain
The starry clearness of the free ?
How is it ? Canst thou feel for me
Some painless sympathy with pain ?"

And lightly does the whisper fall :
" 'T is hard for thee to fathom this ;
I triumph in conclusive bliss,
And that serene result of all."

So hold I commerce with the dead ;
Or so methinks the dead would say ;
Or so shall grief with symbols play,
And pining life be fancy-fed.

Now looking to some settled end,
That these things pass, and I shall prove
A meeting somewhere, love with love,
I crave your pardon, oh my friend ;

If not so fresh, with love as true,
I, clasping brother-hands, aver
I could not, if I would, transfer
The whole I felt for him to you.

For which be they that hold apart
The promise of the golden hours ?
First love, first friendship, equal powers
That marry with the virgin heart.

Still mine that cannot but deplore,
That beats within a lonely place,
That yet remembers his embrace,
But at his footstep leaps no more,

My heart, though widowed, may not rest
Quite in the love of what is gone,
But seeks to beat in time with one
That warms another living breast.

Ah ! take the imperfect gift I bring,
 Knowing the primrose yet is dear,
 The primrose of the later year,
As not unlike to that of Spring.

LXXXIV.

SWEET after showers, ambrosial air,
That rollest from the gorgeous gloom
Of evening over brake and bloom
And meadow, slowly breathing bare

The round of space, and rapt below
Through all the dewy-tasselled wood,
And shadowing down the horned flood
In ripples, fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek, and sigh
The full new life that feeds thy breath
Throughout my frame, till Doubt and Death,
Ill brethren, let the fancy fly

From belt to belt of crimson seas,
On leagues of odor streaming far,
To where, in yonder orient star,
A hundred spirits whisper "Peace."

LXXXV.

I PASSED beside the reverend walls
 In which of old I wore the gown ;
 I roved at random through the town,
And saw the tumult of the halls ;

And heard once more in college fanes
 The storm their high-built organs make,
 And thunder-music, rolling, shake
The prophets blazoned on the panes ;

And caught once more the distant shout,
 The measured pulse of racing oars
 Among the willows ; paced the shores
And many a bridge, and all about

The same gray flats again, and felt
 The same, but not the same ; and last,
 Up that long walk of limes I passed,
To see the rooms in which he dwelt.

Another name was on the door :

I lingered ; all within was noise
Of songs, and clapping hands, and boys
That crashed the glass, and beat the floor ;

Where once we held debate, a band
Of youthful friends, on mind and art,
And labor, and the changing mart,
And all the framework of the land ;

When one would aim an arrow fair,
But send it slackly from the string ;
And one would pierce an outer ring,
And one an inner, here and there ;

And last, the master-bowman, he
Would cleave the mark. A willing ear
We lent him. Who, but hung to hear
The rapt oration flowing free

From point to point with power and grace,
And music in the bounds of law,
To those conclusions when we saw
The God within him light his face,

And seem to lift the form, and glow
In azure orbits heavenly-wise ;
And over those ethereal eyes
The bar of Michael Angelo.

LXXXVI.

WILD bird, whose warble, liquid sweet,
Rings Eden through the budded quicks,
O, tell me where the senses mix,
O, tell me where the passions meet,

Whence radiate: fierce extremes employ
Thy spirits in the dusking leaf,
And in the midmost heart of grief
Thy passion clasps a secret joy:

And I, — my harp would prelude woe, —
I cannot all command the strings;
The glory of the sum of things
Will flash along the chords and go.

LXXXVII.

WITCH-ELMS, that counterchange the floor
Of this flat lawn with dusk and bright;
And thou, with all thy breadth and height
Of foliage, towering sycamore;

How often, hither wandering down,
My Arthur found your shadows fair,
And shook to all the liberal air
The dust and din and steam of town!

He brought an eye for all he saw;
He mixed in all our simple sports;
They pleased him, fresh from brawling courts
And dusky purlieus of the law.

O joy to him, in this retreat,
Immantled in ambrosial dark,
To drink the cooler air, and mark
The landscape winking through the heat!

O sound to rout the brood of cares,
The sweep of scythe in morning dew
The gust that round the garden flew.
And tumbled half the mellowing pears!

O bliss, when all in circle drawn
About him, heart and ear were fed,
To hear him, as he lay and read
The Tuscan poets on the lawn:

Or in the all-golden afternoon
A guest, or happy sister, sung,
Or here she brought the harp, and flung
A ballad to the brightening moon:

Nor less it pleased, in livelier moods,
Beyond the bounding hill to stray,
And break the livelong summer day
With banquet in the distant woods;

Whereat we glanced from theme to theme,
Discussed the books to love or hate,
Or touched the changes of the state,
Or threaded some Socratic dream;

But if I praised the busy town,
 He loved to rail against it still,
 For "ground in yonder social mill,
We rub each other's angles down,

"And merge," he said, "in form and gloss
 The picturesque of man and man."
 We talked: the stream beneath us ran,
The wine-flask lying couched in moss,

Or cooled within the glooming wave,
 And last, returning from afar,
 Before the crimson-circled star
Had fallen into her father's grave,

And brushing ankle-deep in flowers,
 We heard behind the woodbine veil
 The milk that bubbled in the pail,
And buzzings of the honeyed hours.

LXXXVIII.

He tasted love with half his mind,
Nor ever drank the inviolate spring
Where nighest heaven, who first could fling
This bitter seed among mankind ;

That could the dead, whose dying eyes
Were closed with wail, resume their life,
They would but find in child and wife
An iron welcome when they rise :

'T was well, indeed, when warm with wine,
To pledge them with a kindly tear :
To talk them over, to wish them here,
To count their memories half divine ;

But if they came who passed away,
Behold their brides in other hands :
The hard heir strides about their lands,
And will not yield them for a day.

Yea, though their sons were none of these,
Not less the yet-loved sire would make
Confusion worse than death, and shake
The pillars of domestic peace.

Ah dear, but come thou back to me :
Whatever change the years have wrought,
I find not yet one lonely thought
That cries against my wish for thee.

LXXXIX.

WHEN rosy plumelets tuft the larch,
And rarely pipes the mounted thrush
Or underneath the barren bush
Flits by the sea-blue bird of March ;

Come, wear the form by which I know
Thy spirit in time among thy peers ;
The hope of unaccomplished years
Be large and lucid round thy brow.

When summer's hourly-mellowing change
May breathe with many roses sweet
Upon the thousand waves of wheat,
That ripple round the lonely grange ;

Come : not in watches of the night,
But where the sunbeam broodeth warm,
Come, beauteous in thine after form,
And like a finer light in light.

XC.

If any vision should reveal
Thy likeness, I might count it vain,
As but the canker of the brain ;
Yea, though it spake and made appeal

To chances where our lots were cast
Together in the days behind,
I might but say, I hear a wind
Of memory murmuring the past.

Yea, though it spake and bared to view
A fact within the coming year ;
And though the months, revolving near,
Should prove the phantom-warning true,

They might not seem thy prophecies,
But spiritual presentiments,
And such refraction of events
As often rises ere they rise.

XCL.

I SHALL not see thee. Dare I say
No spirit ever brake the band
That stays him from the native land
Where first he walked when clasped in clay?

No visual shade of some one lost,
But he, the Spirit himself, may come
Where all the nerve of sense is numb;
Spirit to Spirit, Ghost to Ghost.

O, therefore from thy sightless range
With gods in un conjectured bliss,
O, from the distance of the abyss
Of tenfold-complicated change,

Descend, and touch, and enter; hear
The wish too strong for words to name;
That in this blindness of the frame
My Ghost may feel that thine is near.

XCII.

How pure at heart and sound in head,
With what divine affections bold,
Should be the man whose thought would hold
An hour's communion with the dead.

In vain shalt thou, or any, call
The spirits from their golden day,
Except, like them, thou too canst say
My spirit is at peace with all.

They haunt the silence of the breast.
Imaginations calm and fair,
The memory like a cloudless air,
The conscience as a sea at rest :

But when the heart is full of din,
And doubt beside the portal waits,
They can but listen at the gates,
And hear the household jar within.

XCIII.

By night we lingered on the lawn,
For under foot the herb was dry ;
And genial warmth ; and o'er the sky
The silvery haze of summer drawn ;

And calm that let the tapers burn
Unwavering : not a cricket chirred :
The brook alone far off was heard,
And on the board the fluttering urn :

And bats went round in fragrant skies,
And wheeled or lit the filmy shapes
That haunt the dusk, with ermine capes
And woolly breasts and beaded eyes ;

While now we sang old songs that pealed
From knoll to knoll, where, couched at ease,
The white kine glimmered, and the trees
Laid their dark arms about the field .

But when those others, one by one,
 Withdrew themselves from me and night,
 And in the house light after light
Went out, and I was all alone,

A hunger seized my heart ; I read
 Of that glad year which once had been,
 In those fallen leaves which kept their green,
The noble letters of the dead :

And strangely on the silence broke
 The silent-speaking words, and strange
 Was love's dumb cry defying change
To test his worth ; and strangely spoke

The faith, the vigor, bold to dwell
 On doubts that drive the coward back,
 And keen through wordy snares to track
Suggestion to her inmost cell.

So word by word, and line by line,
 The dead man touched me from the past,
 And all at once it seemed at last
His living soul was flashed on mine,

And mine in his was wound, and whirled
About empyreal heights of thought,
And came on that which is, and caught
The deep pulsations of the world,

Æonian music measuring out
The steps of Time, — the shocks of Chance, —
The blows of Death. At length my trance
Was cancelled, stricken through with doubt.

Vague words! but ah, how hard to frame
In matter-moulded forms of speech,
Or even for intellect to reach
Through memory that which I became :

Till now the doubtful dusk revealed
The knolls once more where, couched at ease,
The white kine glimmered, and the trees
Laid their dark arms about the field :

And sucked from out the distant gloom,
A breeze began to tremble o'er
The large leaves of the sycamore;
And fluctuate all the still perfume ;

And gathering freshlier overhead,
 Rocked the full-foliaged elms, and swung
 The heavy-folded rose, and flung
The lilies to and fro, and said

“The dawn, the dawn,” and died away ;
 And East and West, without a breath,
 Mixed their dim lights, like life and death,
To broaden into boundless day,

XCIV.

You say, but with no touch of scorn,
Sweet-hearted, you, whose light-blue eyes
Are tender over drowning flies,
You tell me, doubt is Devil-born.

I know not: one indeed I knew
In many a subtle question versed,
Who touched a jarring lyre at first,
But ever strove to make it true:

Perplexed in faith, but pure in deeds,
At last he beat his music out.
There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds.

He fought his doubts and gathered strength,
He would not make his judgment blind,
He faced the spectres of the mind
And laid them: thus he came at length

To find a stronger faith his own ;
 And Power was with him in the night,
 Which makes the darkness and the light,
And dwells not in the light alone,

But in the darkness and the cloud,
 As over Sinai's peaks of old,
 While Israel made their gods of gold,
Although the tempest blew so loud.

XCV.

My love has talked with rocks and trees,
He finds on misty mountain-ground
His own vast shadow glory-crowned,
He sees himself in all he sees.

Two partners of a married life, —
I looked on these and thought of thee
In vastness and in mystery,
And of my spirit as of a wife.

These two, — they dwelt with eye on eye,
Their hearts of old have beat in tune,
Their meetings made December June,
Their every parting was to die.

Their love has never passed away ;
The days she never can forget
Are earnest that he loves her yet,
Whate'er the faithless people say.

Her life is lone, he sits apart,
 He loves her yet, she will not weep,
 Though, rapt in matters dark and deep,
He seems to slight her simple heart.

He thrids the labyrinth of the mind,
 He reads the secret of the star,
 He seems so near and yet so far,
He looks so cold : she thinks him kind.

She keeps the gift of years before,
 A withered violet is her bliss ;
 She knows not what his greatness is,
For that, for all, she loves him more.

For him she plays, to him she sings
 Of early faith and plighted vows ;
 She knows but matters of the house,
And he, he knows a thousand things.

Her faith is fixed and cannot move,
 She darkly feels him great and wise,
 She dwells on him with faithful eyes,
"I cannot understand : I love."

XCVI.

You leave us ; you will see the Rhine,
And those fair hills I sailed below,
When I was there with him ; and go
By summer belts of wheat and vine

To where he breathed his latest breath,
That City. All her splendor seems
No livelier than the wisp that gleams
On Lethe in the eyes of Death.

Let her great Danube rolling fair
Enwind her isles, unmarked of me :
I have not seen, I will not see
Vienna : rather dream that there,

A treble darkness, evil haunts
The birth, the bridal ; friend from friend
Is oftener parted, fathers bend
Above more graves, a thousand wants

Gnar at the heels of men, and prey
 By each cold hearth, and sadness flings
 Her shadow on the blaze of kings ;
And yet myself have heard him say,

That not in any mother town
 With statelier progress to and fro
 The double tides of chariots flow
By park and suburb under brown

Of lustier leaves ; nor more content,
 He told me, lives in any crowd,
 When all is gay with lamps, and loud
With sport and song, in booth and tent,

Imperial halls, or open plain ;
 And wheels the circlèd dance, and breaks
 The rocket molten into flakes
Of crimson or in emerald rain.

XCVII.

RiseST thou thus, dim dawn, again,
So loud with voices of the birds,
So thick with lowings of the herds,
Day, when I lost the flower of men ;

Who tremblest through thy darkling red
On yon swollen brook that bubbles fast
By meadows breathing of the past,
And woodlands holy to the dead ;

Who murmurest in the foliaged eaves
A song that slights the coming care,
And Autumn laying here and there
A fiery finger on the leaves ;

Who wakenest with thy balmy breath
To myriads on the genial earth,
Memories of bridal, or of birth,
And unto myriads more, of death.

O, wheresoever those may be,
 Betwixt the slumber of the poles,
 To-day they count as kindred souls ;
They know me not, but mourn with me.

XCVIII.

I WAKE, I rise ; from end to end,
Of all the landscape underneath
I find no place that does not breathe
Some gracious memory of my friend :

No gray old grange, or lonely fold,
Or low morass and whispering reed,
Or simple stile from mead to mead,
Or sheepwalk up the windy wold ;

Nor hoary knoll of ash and haw
That hears the latest linnnet trill,
Nor quarry trenched along the hill,
And haunted by the wrangling daw ;

Nor runlet tinkling from the rock
Nor pastoral rivulet that swerves
To left and right through meadowy curves,
That feed the mothers of the flock ;

But each has pleased a kindred eye,
And each reflects a kindlier day;
And, leaving these, to pass away,
I think once more he seems to die.

XCIX.

UNWATCHED the garden bough shall sway,
The tender blossom flutter down,
Unloved that beech will gather brown,
This maple burn itself away ;

Unloved, the sunflower, shining fair,
Ray round with flames her disk of seed,
And many a rose-carnation feed
With summer spice the humming air ;

Unloved, by many a sandy bar,
The brook shall babble down the plain,
At noon, or when the lesser wain
Is twisting round the polar star ;

Uncared for, gird the windy grove,
And flood the haunts of hern and crake ;
Or into silver arrows break
The sailing moon in creek and cove ;

Till from the garden and the wild
 A fresh association blow,
 And year by year the landscape grow
Familiar to the stranger's child;

As year by year the laborer tills
 His wonted glebe, or lops the glades;
 And year by year our memory fades
From all the circle of the hills.

C.

We leave the well-beloved place
Where first we gazed upon the sky ;
The roofs that heard our earliest cry
Will shelter one of stranger race.

We go, but ere we go from home,
As down the garden-walks I move,
Two spirits of a diverse love
Contend for loving masterdom.

One whispers, "Here thy boyhood sung
Long since its matin song, and heard
The low love-language of the bird
In native hazels tassel-hung."

The other answers, "Yea, but here
Thy feet have strayed in after hours
With thy lost friend among the bowers,
And this hath made them trebly dear."

These two have striven half the day,
And each prefers his separate claim,
Poor rivals in a losing game,
That will not yield each other way.

I turn to go: my feet are set
To leave the pleasant fields and farms;
They mix in one another's arms
To one pure image of regret.

CL.

ON that last night before we went
From out the doors where I was bred,
I dreamed a vision of the dead,
Which left my after morn content.

Methought I dwelt within a hall,
And maidens with me; distant hills
From hidden summits fed with rills
A river sliding by the wall.

The hall with harp and carol rang.
They sang of what is wise and good
And graceful. In the centre stood
A statue veiled, to which they sang;

And which, though veiled, was known to me,
The shape of him I loved, and love
Forever: then flew in a dove,
And brought a summons from the sea:

And when they learnt that I must go,
They wept and wailed, but led the way
To where a little shallop lay
At anchor in the flood below ;

And on by many a level mead,
And shadowing bluff that made the banks,
We glided, winding under ranks
Of iris, and the golden reed ;

And still, as vaster grew the shore,
And rolled the floods in grander space,
The maidens gathered strength and grace,
And presence lordlier than before ;

And I myself, who sat apart
And watched them, waxed in every limb ;
I felt the thews of Anakim,
The pulses of a Titan's heart ;

As one would sing the death of war,
And one would chant the history
Of that great race, which is to be,
And one the shaping of a star .

Until the forward-creeping tides
 Began to foam, and we to draw
 From deep to deep, to where we saw
A great ship lift her shining sides.

The man we loved was there on deck,
 But thrice as large as man he bent
 To greet us. Up the side I went,
And fell in silence on his neck :

Whereat those maidens, with one mind,
 Bewailed their lot; I did them wrong :
 “ We served thee here,” they said, “ so long,
And wilt thou leave us now behind ?”

So rapt I was, they could not win
 An answer from my lips, but he
 Replying, “ Enter likewise ye
And go with us:” they entered in.

And while the wind began to sweep
 A music out of sheet and shroud,
 We steered her toward a crimson cloud
That landlike slept along the deep.

CII.

THE time draws near the birth of Christ ;
The moon is hid, the night is still :
A single church below the hill
Is pealing, folded in the mist.

A single peal of bells below,
That wakens at this hour of rest
A single murmur in the breast,
That these are not the bells I know.

Like strangers' voices here they sound,
In lands where not a memory strays,
Nor landmark breathes of other days,
But all is new, unhallowed ground.

CIII.

THIS holly by the cottage-eave,
To-night, ungathered, shall it stand :
We live within the stranger's land,
And strangely falls our Christmas eve.

Our father's dust is left alone
And silent under other snows :
There in due time the woodbine blows,
The violet comes, but we are gone.

No more shall wayward grief abuse
The genial hour with mask and mime ;
For change of place, like growth of time,
Has broke the bond of dying use.

Let cares their petty shadows cast,
By which our lives are chiefly proved,
A little spare the night I loved,
And hold it solemn to the past.

But let no footstep beat the floor,
Now bowl of wassail mantle warm :
For who would keep an ancient form
Through which the spirit breathes no more ?

Be neither song, nor game, nor feast,
Nor harp be touched, nor flute be blown ;
No dance, no motion, save alone
What lightens in the lucid east

Of rising worlds by yonder wood.
Long sleeps the summer in the seed ;
Run out your measured arcs, and lead
The closing cycle rich in good.

CIV,

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light .
The year is dying in the night ;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow :
The year is going, let him go ;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more ;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife ;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
 The faithless coldness of the times ;
 Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
 The civic slander and the spite ;
 Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease,
 Ring out the narrowing lust of gold ;
 Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
 The larger heart, the kindlier hand ;
 Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

CV.

It is the day when he was born,
A bitter day that early sank
Behind a purple-frosty bank
Of vapor, leaving night forlorn.

The time admits not flowers or leaves
To deck the banquet. Fiercely flies
The blast of North and East, and ice
Makes daggers at the sharpened eaves,

And bristles all the brakes and thorns
To yon hard crescent, as she hangs
Above the wood which grides and clangs
Its leafless ribs and iron horns

Together, in the drifts that pass,
To darken on the rolling brine
That breaks the coast. But fetch the wine,
Arrange the board and brim the glass ;

Bring in great logs and let them lie,
 To make a solid core of heat ;
 Be cheerful-minded, talk and treat
Of all things even as he were by :

We keep the day. With festal cheer,
 With books and music, surely we
 Will drink to him, whate'er he be,
And sing the songs he loved to hear.

CVL

I WILL not shut me from my kind;
And, lest I stiffen into stone,
I will not eat my heart alone,
Nor feed with sighs a passing wind:

What profit lies in barren faith,
And vacant yearning, though with might
To scale the heaven's highest height,
Or dive below the wells of Death?

What find I in the highest place,
But mine own phantom chanting hymns?
And on the depths of death there swims
The reflex of a human face.

I'll rather take what fruit may be
Of sorrow under human skies:
'T is held that sorrow makes us wise,
Whatever wisdom sleep with thee.

CVII.

HEART-AFFLUENCE in discursive talk
From household fountains never dry ;
The critic clearness of an eye,
That saw through all the Muses' walk ;

Seraphic intellect and force
To seize and throw the doubts of man ;
Impassioned logic, which outran
The hearer in its fiery course ;

High nature amorous of the good,
But touched with no ascetic gloom ;
And passion pure in snowy bloom
Through all the years of April blood ;

A love of freedom rarely felt,
Of freedom in her regal seat
Of England, not the schoolboy heat,
The blind hysterics of the Celt ;

And manhood fused with female grace
In such a sort, the child would twine
A trustful hand, unasked, in thine,
And find his comfort in thy face ;

All these have been, and thee mine eyes
Have looked on : if they looked in vain,
My shame is greater who remain,
Nor let thy wisdom make me wise.

CVIII.

THY converse drew us with delight,
The men of rathe and riper years :
The feeble soul, a haunt of fears,
Forgot his weakness in thy sight.

On thee the loyal-hearted hung,
The proud was half disarmed of pride,
Nor cared the serpent at thy side
To flicker with his treble tongue.

The stern were mild when thou wert by,
The flippant put himself to school
And heard thee, and the brazen fool
Was softened, and he knew not why ;

• While I, thy dearest, sat apart,
And felt thy triumph was as mine ;
And loved them more, that they were thine,
The graceful tact, the Christian art •

Not mine the sweetness or the skill,
But mine the love that will not tire,
And, born of love, the vague desire
That spurs an imitative will.

CIX.

THE churl in spirit, up or down,
 Along the scale of ranks, through all
 To who may grasp a golden ball
By blood a king, at heart a clown ;

The churl in spirit, howe'er he veil
 His want in forms for fashion's sake,
 Will let his coltish nature break
At seasons through the gilded pale :

For who can always act ? but he,
 To whom a thousand memories call,
 Not being less but more than all
The gentleness he seemed to be,

So wore his outward best, and joined
 Each office of the social hour
 To noble manners, as the flower
And native growth of noble mind ;

Nor ever narrowness or spite,
Or villain fancy fleeting by,
Drew in the expression of an eye
Where God and Nature met in light,

And thus he bore without abuse
The grand old name of gentleman
Defamed by every charlatan,
And soiled with all ignoble use.

CX.

High wisdom holds my wisdom less,
That I, who gaze with temperate eyes
On glorious insufficiencies,
Set light by narrower perfectness.

But thou, that fillest all the room
Of all my love, art reason why
I seem to cast a careless eye
On souls, the lesser lords of doom.

For what wert thou? some novel power
Sprang up for ever at a touch,
And hope could never hope too much,
In watching thee from hour to hour,

Large elements in order brought,
And tracts of calm from tempest made,
And world-wide fluctuation swayed
In vassal tides that followed thought.

CXL.

'T is held that sorrow makes us wise ;
Yet now much wisdom sleeps with thee
Which not alone had guided me,
But served the seasons that may rise ;

For can I doubt who knew thee keen
In intellect, with force and skill
To strive, to fashion, to fulfil, —
I doubt not what thou wouldst have been :

A life in civic action warm,
A soul on highest mission sent,
A potent voice of Parliament,
A pillar steadfast in the storm,

Should licensed boldness gather force,
Becoming, when the time has birth,
A lever to uplift the earth
And roll it in another course,

With many shocks that come and go,
With agonies, with energies,
With overthrowings, and with cries,
And undulations to and fro.

CXII.

Who loves not knowledge? Who shall rail
Against her beauty? May she mix
With men and prosper! Who shall fix
Her pillars? Let her work prevail.

But on her forehead sits a fire:
She sets her forward countenance
And leaps into the future chance,
Submitting all things to desire.

Half-grown as yet, a child, and vain,—
She cannot fight the fear of death.
What is she, cut from love and faith,
But some wild Pallas from the brain

Of Demons? fiery-hot to burst
All barriers in her onward race
For power. Let her know her place;
She is the second, not the first.

A higher hand must make her mild,
 If all be not in vain ; and guide
 Her footsteps, moving side by side
With wisdom, like the younger child ;

For she is earthly of the mind,
 But wisdom heavenly of the soul.
 O friend, who camest to thy goal
So early, leaving me behind,

I would the great world grew like thee,
 Who grewest not alone in power
 And knowledge, but from hour to hour
In reverence and in charity.

CXIII.

Now fades the last long streak of snow,
Now burgeons every maze of quick
About the flowering squares, and thick
By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and long,
The distance takes a lovelier hue,
And drowned in yonder living blue
The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,
The flocks are whiter down the vale,
And milkier every milky sail
On winding stream or distant sea ;

Where now the seamew pipes, or dives
In yonder greening gleam, and fly
The happy birds, that change their sky
To build and brood ; that live their lives

From land to land ; and in my breast
Spring wakens too ; and my regret
Becomes an April violet,
And buds and blossoms like the rest.

CXIV.

Is it, then, regret for buried time
That keenlier in sweet April wakes,
And meets the year, and gives and takes
The colors of the crescent prime ?

Not all ; the songs, the stirring air,
The life re-orient out of dust,
Cry through the sense to hearten trust
In that which made the world so fair.

Not all regret ; the face will shine
Upon me, while I muse alone ;
The dear, dear voice that I have known
Will speak to me of me and mine :

Yet less of sorrow lives in me
For days of happy commune dead ;
Less yearning for the friendship fled,
Than some strong bond which is to be.

CXV.

O DAYS and hours, your work is this,
 To hold me from my proper place,
 A little while from his embrace,
For fuller gain of after bliss :

That out of distance might ensue
 Desire of nearness doubly sweet ;
 And unto meeting, when we meet,
Delight a hundredfold accrue,

For every grain of sand that runs,
 And every span of shade that steals,
 And every kiss of toothed wheels,
And all the courses of the suns.

CXVI.

CONTEMPLATE all this work of time,
The giant laboring in his youth ;
Nor dream of human love and truth,
As dying Nature's earth and lime ;

But trust that those we call the dead
Are breathers of an ampler day
For ever nobler ends. They say,
The solid earth whereon we tread

In tracts of fluent heat began,
And grew to seeming-random forms,
The seeming prey of cyclic storms,
Till at the last arose the man ;

Who throve and branched from clime to clime,
The herald of a higher race,
And of himself in higher place,
If so he type this work of time

Within himself, from more to more ;
 And, crowned with attributes of woe
 Like glories, move his course, and show
That life is not as idle ore,

But iron dug from central gloom,
 And heated hot with burning fears ;
 And dipped in baths of hissing tears,
And battered with the shocks of doom

To shape and use. Arise and fly
 The reeling Faun, the sensual feast ;
 Move upward, working out the beast,
And let the ape and tiger die.

CXVII.

Doors, where my heart was used to beat
So quickly, not as one that weeps
I come once more; the city sleeps;
I smell the meadow in the street;

I hear a chirp of birds; I see
Betwixt the black fronts long withdrawn
A light-blue lane of early dawn,
And think of early days and thee,

And bless thee, for thy lips are bland,
And bright the friendship of thine eye;
And in my thoughts with scarce a sigh
I take the pressure of thine hand.

CXVIII.

I TRUST I have not wasted breath :
I think we are not wholly brain,
Magnetic mockeries ; not in vain,
Like Paul with beasts, I fought with Death.

Not only cunning casts in clay :
Let Science prove we are, and then
What matters Science unto men,
At least to me ? I would not stay.

Let him, the wiser man who springs
Hereafter, up from childhood shape
His action like the greater ape,
But I was born to other things.

CXIX.

SAD Hesper o'er the buried sun,
And ready, thou, to die with him,
Thou watchest all things ever dim
And dimmer, and a glory done :

The team is loosened from the wain,
The boat is drawn upon the shore ;
Thou listenest to the closing door,
And life is darkened in the brain.

Bright Phosphor, fresher for the night,
By thee the world's great work is heard
Beginning, and the wakeful bird ;
Behind thee comes the greater light :

The market-boat is on the stream,
And voices hail it from the brink ;
Thou hear'st the village hammer clink,
And seest the moving of the team.

Sweet Hesper-Phosphor, double name
For what is one, the first, the last,
Thou, like my present and my past,
Thy place is changed, thou art the same.

CXX.

O, WAST thou with me, dearest, then,
 While I rose up against my doom,
 And strove to burst the folded gloom,
To bare the eternal Heavens again,

To feel once more, in placid awe,
 The strong imagination roll
 A sphere of stars about my soul,
In all her motion one with law ?

If thou wert with me, and the grave
 Divide us not, be with me now,
 And enter in at breast and brow,
Till all my blood, a fuller wave,

Be quickened with a livelier breath,
 And like an inconsiderate boy,
 As in the former flash of joy,
I slip the thoughts of life and death ;

And all the breeze of Fancy blows,
And every dew-drop paints a bow ;
The wizard lightnings deeply glow,
And every thought breaks out a rose

CXXI.

There rolls the deep where grew the tree.
O earth, what changes hast thou seen!
There where the long street roars, hath been
The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow
From form to form, and nothing stands,
They melt like mist, the solid lands,
Like clouds they shape themselves and go.

But in my spirit will I dwell,
And dream my dream, and hold it true;
For though my lips may breathe adieu,
I cannot think the thing farewell.

CXXII.

THAT which we dare invoke to bless ;
Our dearest faith, our ghastliest doubt ;
He, They, One, All ; within, without ;
The Power in darkness whom we guess ;

I found Him not in world or sun,
Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye ;
Nor through the questions men may try,
The petty cobwebs we have spun :

If e'er when faith had fallen asleep,
I heard a voice, " Believe no more,"
And heard an ever-breaking shore
That tumbled in the Godless deep ;

A warmth within the breast would melt
The freezing reason's colder part,
And like a man in wrath the heart
Stood up and answered, " I have felt."

No, like a child in doubt and fear:
But that blind clamor made me wise;
Then was I as a child that cries,
But, crying, knows his father near;

And what I seem beheld again
What is, and no man understands;
And out of darkness came the hands
That reach through nature, moulding men.

CXXIII.

WHATEVER I have said or sung,
Some bitter notes my harp would give,
Yea, though there often seemed to live
A contradiction on the tongue,

Yet Hope had never lost her youth ;
She did but look through dimmer eyes ;
Or Love but played with gracious lies,
Because he felt so fixed in truth :

And if the song were full of care,
He breathed the spirit of the song ;
And if the words were sweet and strong,
He set his royal signet there ;

Abiding with me till I sail
To seek thee on the mystic deeps,
And this electric force, that keeps
A thousand pulses dancing, fail.

CXLIV.

Love is and was my Lord and King,
And in his presence I attend
To hear the tidings of my friend,
Which every hour his couriers bring.

Love is and was my King and Lord,
And will be, though as yet I keep
Within his court on earth, and sleep
Encompassed by his faithful guard,

And hear at times a sentinel
That moves about from place to place,
And whispers to the vast of space
Among the worlds. that all is well.

CXXV.

AND all is well, though faith and form
Be sundered in the night of fear ;
Well roars the storm to those that hear
A deeper voice across the storm,

Proclaiming social truth shall spread,
And justice, e'en though thrice again
The red fool-fury of the Seine
Should pile her barricades with dead.

But woe to him that wears a crown,
And him, the lazar, in his rags :
They tremble, the sustaining crags ;
The spires of ice are toppled down,

And molten up, and roar in flood ;
The fortress crashes from on high,
The brute earth lightens to the sky,
And the vast Æon sinks in blood,

And compassed by the fires of Hell,
While thou, dear spirit, happy star,
O'erlook'st the tumult from afar,
And smilest, knowing all is well.

CXXVI.

THE love that rose on stronger wings,
Unpalsied when he met with Death,
Is comrade of the lesser faith
That sees the course of human things.

No doubt, vast eddies in the flood
Of onward time shall yet be made,
And throned races may degrade;
Yet, oh ye ministers of good,

Wild Hours that fly with Hope and Fear,
If all your office had to do
With old results that look like new,
If this were all your mission here,

To draw, to sheathe a useless sword,
To fool the crowd with glorious lies,
To cleave a creed in sects and cries,
To change the bearing of a word,

To shift an arbitrary power,
 To cramp the student at his desk,
 To make old baseness picturesque
And tuft with grass a feudal tower;

Why then my scorn might well descend
 On you and yours. I see in part
 That all, as in some piece of art,
Is toil coöperant to an end.

CXXVII.

DEAR friend, far off, my lost desire,
So far, so near, in woe and weal;
O, loved the most when most I feel
There is a lower and a higher;

Known and unknown, human, divine!
Sweet human hand and lips and eye,
Dear heavenly friend that canst not die,
Mine, mine, forever, ever mine!

Strange friend, past, present, and to be,
Loved deeplier, darklier understood;
Behold I dream a dream of good
And mingle all the world with thee.

CXXVIII.

THY voice is on the rolling air ;
I hear thee where the waters run ;
Thou standest in the rising sun,
And in the setting thou art fair.

What art thou, then ? I cannot guess ;
But though I seem in star and flower
To feel thee, some diffusive power,
I do not therefore love thee less :

My love involves the love before ;
My love is vaster passion now ;
Though mixed with God and Nature thou,
I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh ;
I have thee still, and I rejoice :
I prosper, circled with thy voice ;
I shall not lose thee, though I die.

CXXX.

O LIVING will that shalt endure
 When all that seems shall suffer shock,
 Rise in the spiritual rock,
Flow through our deeds and make them pure,

That we may lift from out the dust
 A voice as unto him that hears,
 A cry above the conquered years
To one that with us works, and trust

With faith that comes of self-control
 The truths that never can be proved
 Until we close with all we loved,
And all we flow from, soul in soul.

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O TRUE and tried, so well and long,
Demand not thou a marriage lay;
In that it is thy marriage day
Is music more than any song.

Nor have I felt so much of bliss
Since first he told me that he loved
A daughter of our house; nor proved
Since that dark day a day like this;

Though I since then have numbered o'er
Some thrice three years: they went and came,
Remade the blood and changed the frame,
And yet is love not less, but more;

No longer caring to embalm
In dying songs a dead regret,
But like a statue solid-set,
And moulded in colossal calm.

Regret is dead, but love is more
Than in the summers that are flown,
For I myself with these have grown
To something greater than before ;

Which makes appear the songs I made
As echoes out of weaker times,
As half but idle brawling rhymes,
The sport of random sun and shade.

But where is she, the bridal flower,
That must be made a wife ere noon ?
She enters, glowing with the moon
Of Eden on its bridal bower :

On me she bends her blissful eyes
And then on thee ; they meet thy look,
And brighten like the star that shook
Betwixt the palms of paradise.

O, when her life was yet in bud,
He too foretold the perfect rose.
For thee she grew, for thee she grows
Forever, and as fair as good.

And thou art worthy ; full of power ;
As gentle ; liberal-minded, great,
Consistent ; wearing all that weight
Or learning lightly like a flower.

But now set out : the noon is near,
And I must give away the bride ;
She fears not, or with thee beside
And me behind her, will not fear :

For I that danced her on my knee,
That watched her on her nurse's arm,
That shielded all her life from harm,
At last must part with her to thee ;

Now waiting to be made a wife,
Her feet, my darling, on the dead ;
Their pensive tablets round her head,
And the most living words of life .

Breathed in her ear. The ring is on,
The "wilt thou" answered, and again
The "wilt thou" asked, till out of twain
Her sweet "I will" has made ye one.

Now sign your names, which shall be read
Mute symbols of a joyful morn
By village eyes as yet unborn ;
The names are signed, and overhead

Begins the clash and clang that tells
The joy to every wandering breeze ;
The blind wall rocks, and on the trees
The dead leaf trembles to the bells.

O happy hour ! and happier hours
Await them. Many a merry face
Salutes them, — maidens of the place,
That pelt us in the porch with flowers.

O happy hour ! behold the bride
With him to whom her hand I gave.
They leave the porch, they pass the grave
That has to-day its sunny side.

To-day the grave is bright for me,
For them the light of life increased
Who stay to share the morning feast,
Who rest to-night beside the sea.

Let all my genial spirits advance
 To meet and greet a whiter sun ;
 My drooping memory will not shun
The foaming grape of eastern France.

It circles round, and fancy plays,
 And hearts are warmed and faces bloom,
 As drinking health to bride and groom,
We wish them store of happy days.

Nor count me all to blame if I
 Conjecture of a stiller guest,
 Perchance, perchance, among the rest,
And, though in silence, wishing joy.

But they must go ; the time draws on,
 And those white-favored horses wait ;
 They rise, but linger, it is late ;
Farewell, we kiss, and they are gone.

A shade falls on us like the dark
 From little cloudlets on the grass,
 But sweeps away as out we pass
To range the woods. to roam the park,

Discussing how their courtship grew,
And talk of others that are wed,
And how she looked, and what he said,
And back we come at fall of dew.

Again the feast, the speech, the glee,
The shade of passing thought, the wealth
Of words and wit, the double health,
The crowning cup, the three times three,

And last the dance ; — till I retire :
Dumb is that tower which spake so loud,
And high in heaven the streaming cloud,
And on the downs a rising fire :

And rise, oh moon, from yonder down,
Till over down and over dale
All night the shining vapor sail
And pass the silent-lighted town,

The white-faced halls, the glancing rills,
And catch at every mountain head,
And o'er the friths that branch and spread
Their sleeping silver through the hills ;

And touch with shade the bridal doors,
 With tender gloom the roof, the wall,
 And breaking let the splendor fall
To spangle all the happy shores

By which they rest, and ocean sounds,
 And, star and system rolling past,
 A soul shall draw from out the vast
And strike his being into bounds,

And, moved through life of lower phase,
 Result in man, be born and think,
 And act and love, a closer link
Betwixt us and the crowning race

Of those that, eye to eye, shall look
 On knowledge; under whose command
 Is Earth and Earth's, and in their hand
Is Nature like an open book;

No longer half-akin to brute,
 For all we thought and loved and did,
 And hoped, and suffered, is but seed
Of what in them is flower and fruit;

Whereof the man, that with me trod
This planet, was a noble type
Appearing ere the times were ripe,
That friend of mine who lives in God,

That God, which ever lives and loves,
One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves.

THE END.

